787

/For additional information on divination in Miao propitiation ceremonies, see category 116, pp. 251-273 and 277-296./

/34 cont'd/

622 whether there was also a property qualification. It is a fact, however, that the present chia-ch'ang, successors of the former shan-chia, all appear to be better off than the ordinary Miao people. Shan-chia is the keeper of knowledge for the Miao people. In his home he keeps the almanac, the Confucian classics, and other kinds of books. The public affairs of the village are under his direction and are all decided upon by him.

[527 787] According to an old Miao custom, on the eve of the New Year, the entire population of the village usually gathered in the shan-chia's home to present him with jars of wines and to offer congratulations. They sang and asked the shan-chia about things of the coming year. From his experience and greater learning, the shan-chia would answer them one by one. The song that they sang was called "The Old Villager," the words of which are as follows:

539 Creating the heaven, creating the earth—Emperor P'an has done;
He made the rites followed by later men.
In accord with the rites, dinner is served for two;
A bare table would trouble the venerable official.
The first cup, we offer to him to drink,
After the second and third cups, the sands turn to gold.*
Thousands of cups are for all the stars to drink,
So that the venerable tree /uncl[illegible]sitting at the table
may not be bored!
The golden/?/* cup is now respectfully put on the table,
Like a moon among the stars in the sky.
As two rows of stars now line the hall,
Also hope that the sun, standing above all the rest, will
protect them.
In P'eng-cheng hall, all the stars are now sitting,
Without rest, without settling down, they await the
difficulties of the coming spring.
Virtue spreads out to all the stars,
May the country be prosperous and the people be secure for
ever!

/46/

Chapter VI. Customs and Practices

1. Birth

852 Twelve days after the birth of a Miao child, his family always
holds a "twelfth-day" celebration for him; after a month there is a
"first-month" celebration. The family kills chickens and cook meat.
They ask a Taoist priest to come to pray for him and name him.
651 The child is usually named "Ya Ta" /Ya the Elder/ or "Ya Erh"
/Ya the Second/, etc. There is also a celebration of his first birthday, but the way it is celebrated is unknown to me.

2. Marriage

582 The Miao are generally betrothed when they are about twenty
years old. Betrothals are either made through the decision of the
584 parents and the advice of go-betweens, or they are made after a
couple have fallen in love and ask the parents for permission and the
consultation of a go-between. In the latter case, the parents always
respect their children's wishes. According to Miao custom, however,
before the formal betrothal, the hour, day, month, and year of birth
of the young couple (these are entered in the family registers) must
be "compared" by someone who is able to read the almanac well
[622 (generally a *chia-ch'ang*). If their horoscopes are in harmony with
787] each other and are not contradictory to those of the parents of both
families, they are formally betrothed; otherwise, they must give
each other up. Therefore, even if a couple are deeply in love and
the match is approved of by the parents, if, unfortunately, their
horoscopes are not "harmonious," they cannot marry. Many trage-
583 dies of lovers have resulted therefrom. Betrothal presents consist of
[431] about 20 dollars (previously 10 dollars or less), three jars of wine,
three pecks of rice, and 30 catties of pork. There are two types of
marriage: one is the *ch'ü-hsi*, in which the betrothal presents are
583 given by the bridegroom's /47/ family; the other is the *chao-chui*
591 /literally, "to call a son-in-law," a marriage in which the son-in-
608 law comes to live in the wife's family/ in which the betrothal presents are given by the bride's family.

/68 cont'd/

4. Magic

754 The Miao have a kind of "black magic," which is intended to injure other people. If a man has a bad enemy, he requests a Taoist priest to avenge him through sorcery. The method is to write the enemy's name on a piece of paper, which is nailed up in a grove of trees. The enemy's soul is thus confined, and he will fall ill with a strange disease and slowly sink into a half-alive state. The only way the victim can be saved is to get hold of the sorceror and compel him to release the soul from imprisonment.

755 This was what I heard from the Miao. Whether this magic was really workable I still do not know. However, I once encountered a disabled man in the home of a Li headman. I was told that this disablement was due to the fact that when this man was a follower of a Li headman who had attacked the Miao, he had killed a great many people. For revenge, the Miao had confined his soul. Might this story be true!

5. Superstition

823 The Miao believe in feng-shui /Chinese system of geomancy/. When I was in Ang-chi village, Lu Tsun-ying, the chia-ch'ang, told me that the reason the Miao people there were so poor was because the feng-shui was not good there. He also pointed out how the feng-shui was poor. The mountain peaks were too sharp, there was a lack of springs, and the aspect was too narrow, so that there was nothing from which wealth could issue. His cousin, a pao-ch'ang,
756 also asked me whether I knew how to practice feng-shui. I gave him a negative answer. He said that he would save more money to enable him to engage a good master of feng-shui, who would find for him a place of prosperity.

●787 They also believe in fortunetelling through horoscopes and the practice of physiognomy. While I was there a number of them asked me whether I knew how to read horoscopes and practice physiognomy. /69/ There are some aspects of their social life that have led the Miao to believe in such superstitions. We will discuss it in detail in the next chapter.

M /20 cont./
*101 After the animal is fattened, an appointment is made with other
CC 563 bull owners in neighboring villages for a bull fight out in the
M open. Victory is a good omen. An auspicious day is selected
[782] to kill the bull for sacrifice to the ancestors. The sacrificer
[541] wears white clothes and a green outer garment. After the
[787] sacrifice the clan members sit around in a circle to drink
[292] heavily and to sing in a most joyful way. Today this custom
[769] is still prevalent in this sub-prefecture.

[273] (10) Chiu Ku Miao. — They originally came from Shih-ping and K'ai-li in Kweichow. It is of the same tribe as the
[167] P'ien-t'ou-he. They prefer green clothes. They are especially
[291] fierce in nature. They wear armor and carry knives. They
[714] go up mountains as if flying, and draw strong bows called the
p'ien-chia. The Tung Mao people who are being taxed by the
[411] Yung Shun Pacification Commission were this tribe. They
[648] repeatedly caused trouble in Chen-ch'i-so before being put
under governmental administration.

(11) He Shan Miao. — They are found in T'ai-kung,
M Kweichow. They bind their hair with blue cotton and live in
[302] secluded valleys. They divine with rushes to know what is
[787] auspicious or inauspicious. During the rebellion of 1795 in the
[648] reign of Ch'ien Lung many members of this tribe joined it, and
many of them were killed at Kou-pai-yen by Fu Chuang-su
/the commander of the government forces/.

M (12) He Chio Miao. — They are very numerous at Ch'ing-
[291] chiang and T'ai-kung. They wear short garments and large
[411] trousers, and going and coming they carry knives and daggers.
[787] Before taking any action they put two snails in a dish, to watch
their fight in order to divine whether the omen is good or bad.
[825] In the twenty-fifth year /1686/ of the reign of K'ang-hsi, with
the Hung Miao, Shih Lao-ch'ung occupied T'ien-hsing-chai,
but was subdued by Kuo Chung-hsiao. Today, remnants of this
group can be found at Lao-feng-shan.

M (13) Ch'e Chai Miao. Originally they were from Li-p'ing
[167] and Ku-chou in Kweichow. Today, their people are still found

M /21 cont./
*101 is washed out and the designs appear. The sixth month is regarded
CC as the beginning of the year. Ox and wine are used in sacrifices
563 to Heaven. When they are sick they do not use medicine, but
M consult sorcerers. Even the poor must kill an animal as a
[805] sacrifice. Before making a move they must divine its propitious-
[782] ness by breaking a reed or picking a chicken bone. Sping opens
with New Year celebrations, in which men blow reed flutes
[755] and women accompany them by ringing tiny bells, dancing
[787] and singing, shoulder to shoulder.

[527] (18) The Yang Pao Miao. — They came from Tsun-I,
[534] Kweichow, being the descendants of the Po chieftain, Yang
Ying-lung. In the thirtieth year of Hung-wu /1397/ in the
[167] Ming period, the Miao complained about the heavy taxation
M and requested a reduction. The then chu-pu /keeper of records/
648 of Lu-ch'i hsien, Sun Ying-lung, went into the native area to
175 calm them. Sun Ying-lung took the chief of the tribe, Yang
CC Erh, to the capital to send up a memorial requesting the establish-
175 ment of a military and civil Ch'ien Hu So /"thousand men
563 office," The Ch'ien hu was a military station official, in charge
669 of 1,000 men. He and his men held hereditary positions/ at
Chen-ch'i, to pacify the area and set up headquarters, introduce
the new system, with 124 villages organized into ten districts,
and Yang Erh was appointed Po Hu Chang /"100 men leader"/
to control them. Afterward because the Miao at Chen-ch'i
became aggressive, often causing the local officials trouble,
and also because of the isolation of the area and the difficulty
of access, the sub-prefecture /t'ing/ was abolished. The temple
M of Yang Lao Ling Kung worshiped by the Miao was actually
*101 built by Yang Erh. They are all said to be descendants of the
CC Po chieftain.
563

M (19) Tzu Chiang Miao. — They originally came from
[346] Ch'ing-p'ing and Tu-yün in Kweichow. They are fond of fight-
ing and killing. Whenever they sacrifice to the spirits they
[167] mount a ladder made of swords /knives?/. In 1795, in the
[782] reign of Ch'ien Lung, the revolts at Ya-pao-chai and Chi-to-
[648] p'ing mainly involved this tribe. Today there are still some at
CC Ting-niu and Yen-lo.
[669]

/95 cont./
584 brothers in the girl's family. After entering the door and a brief
rest, the ceremony of sticking incense before the ancestral
[782] tablet of the girl's family begins. The groom kowtows three
times. If he is not present, his father kowtows in his place.
If the groom is present he must also kowtow to his future father-
in-law, mother-in-law, and other elders. If the girl's family
[556] is wealthy, then a pig will be killed to entertain the guests
from the groom's family. The guests remain in the girl's family
574 for three days, during which the immediate relative of the
584 girl's family take turns in entertaining them with meals, called
"meals from door to door." The closest relatives must enter-
tain the visitors at breakfast, because breakfast is considered
[264] the most important meal in the Miao countryside. For instance,
say there are six families, A, B, C, D, E, and F, with A and C
being the closest relatives. Dinner on the first evening is given
by the host family, a /96/ breakfast on the second day is given
by family A, lunch by family E, and dinner by family B. On
the third day breakfast is given by family C, lunch by family
F, and dinner by family D. When the guests are seen off on
the fourth day, breakfast is given by the host family. As a
rule three meals are served in a day, but when there are a large
[264] number of /clan/ brothers there are five or six meals in one day.
583 After breakfast on the fourth day the guests depart. Return
584 presents from the girl's family consist of a suit of clothes, a
pair of shoes, and a hat for the future son-in-law, a piece of
material for a pair of trousers for each guest, a pair of shoes
each for the parents of the groom, and a pig's leg for the go-
between.

585 A few months or half a year before the marriage the go-
787 between visits the girl's family to ask for the date and time
777 of her birth. He must bring with him two or four strings of cash
and some sweetmeats. This ceremony is called "asking for the
584 lucky birth date." The girl's birth date and time thus obtained
are matched with those of the groom in order to pick an aus-
picious day for the wedding. The date is communicated to
583 the girl's family through the go-between. They then begin to

/96 cont./
583 get busy with the bride's marriage portion. Most commonly it
consists of one or two trunks, four or five garments making one
outfit, two pairs of trousers, and a suit of clothes for the groom.
[301] Such women's ornaments as earrings, rings, bracelets, and
neck rings have been sent previously by the groom's family to
the bride's, or silver is sent instead for the bride's family to
have the ornaments made of it. On the day set the groom's
585 family send along wine, meat, firecrackers, incense and
candles, and torches, and recently they include sedan chairs
or chairs. When they arrive before the entrance of the bride's
[177] family, recently, in imitation of the Chinese custom, they
close the entrance and demand money for opening the gate in
the sum of eight hundred cash or one string /one thousand/ of
cash. Further, they intentionally curse the go-between and
complain that the gifts of wine and meat sent by the boy's
family are not enough. The bride then gets dressed up, and
[756] meanwhile a Miao sorcerer is invited to make sacrifices to the
[782] ancestors. A square table is laid with sacrificial items, incense
and candles, and the sorcerer priest recites incantations, kow-
[787] tows, and performs divination with straws, to cut off the powers
of evil. He lights two torches, opens a parasol, and invites the
bride to come out to kowtow three times to the ancestral tablet.
After this she kowtows once to her parents, once to all her
brothers and paternal male cousins, and once to her maternal
grandparents. This done, she turns around facing outside and
[556] mounts the sedan chair (in a rich family) or walks (middle-
class family), holding a half-opened parasol. The brothers,
sisters, cousins, mother's married sisters, mother's brothers
wives, and mother of the bride accompany her on the way.
If the bride arrives too early at her husband's house, she has to
wait in a side building or take a rest in a neighbor's house. At
585 that time a table is laid in front of the entrance with incense
~~782~~ and candles, a piece of cooked meat, and three cups of wine.
[756] A guest sorcerer offers the following prayer:
[539]

"The day is auspicious, the moment is opportune,
Heaven and earth open out.

845 /99 cont./
asked to utter and write spells to hasten the womb. After the
844 infant is born the cord is cut with a pair of scissors and the
placenta is buried in the ground in the house or outside.

After childbirth a Miao woman drinks several bowls of cold
water for the purpose of purifying her blood. Within three days
846 she goes out to the fields to work. There are cases in which a
woman gives birth in the forenoon and goes out to work in the
afternoon. It is said that the Miao woman is able to do this by
[278] eating a secret herb. For postnatal nourishment the poor eats
[556] eggs and the rich eats chicken.

553 Recently, the Miao have adopted the Chinese custom of
inviting friends and relatives to a feast and naming ceremony
[177] on the third day after a child's birth. A name is sometimes
551 adopted according to the time of birth. For instance, if a child
is born in a certain month, it would be named after the month.
The chief of the Miao at the time of the rebellion during the
reign of Emperor Ch'ien Lung was called Wu pa-yüeh /Wu,
[805] Eighth Month/. Sometimes the name of the season when the
birth occurred is adopted. In another case, the weight of the
infant may be used as the name, for instance, an infant weighing
so many chin at birth will be named for that weight. In
still other cases, the name of an animal, a pig, goat, sheep,
dog, or cow is used in the belief that the child will be easy to
raise.

853 There is no definite time for feeding the baby. Generally
when the baby cries it is fed. If the mother has no milk, the
baby is then fed with sugar and rice. At the time of teething,
856 if the first tooth emerges in the upper jaw, it is a sign of ill
[787] omen, portending the death of one of the parents or paternal
[763] grandparents, because the Miao believe that such a tooth is a
[826] grave-digging hoe.

/100/ A pregnant unmarried girl often produces an abortion
847 by swallowing mercury. Illegitimate infants are often drowned.
848 Properly married couples rarely practice abortion or infanticide.

/100 cont./

(4) Funerals

764 The funeral rites of the Miao today, like their marriage
[177] rites, have been greatly influenced by the Chinese. Their old
funeral customs were different from those of today. Volume
[113] 40 of Hunan Tung Chih /Geographical Encyclopedia of Hunan
(1885)/: "At the time of burial the Miao also know how to cry
and weep, but they do not use burial gowns nor coffins, nor
do they wear coarse hemp mourning garments. When a man
[787] dies, a site is selected by divination with bamboo splints, and
there a hole three or four ch'ih deep is dug, which is lined
with wooden planks. The corpse is placed in the hole and
765 covered with earth. Three days later, the deceased's family
slaughters an animal to invite the relatives to eat and drink.
In the second month of the following year they make sacrificial
769 offerings of animals and paper money: for the sons place their
782 offerings on the left, the daughters on the right according to
custom. This is done every year for three years and no more.
They do not have the custom of sweeping the tomb each year.
765 The newly bereaved family is condoled with gifts of local
products by relatives and friends. The host family slaughters
a cow and sets up a meal. This is called 'seeing off the
764 mourners.'" Volume 11 of Lung-shan Hsien Chih /Gazetteer
of Lung-shan Hsien (1878)/ states: "When a Miao dies, wooden
[113] planks are put on the bed, and the corpse is placed on them.
Men and women weep loudly around him; relatives /clansmen
and by marriage?/ come to offer condolences, bringing various
cereals, joining sadly in the weeping. Piling up rocks and earth
they build a grave mound, but only where the head lies they
do not pile up rocks and earth so as not to crush it. After three
765 days they slaughter an animal and make a sacrifice at the tomb,
782 in which all the relatives participate, leaving after being
wined and dined. In the second month of the following year,
769 sacrifices are offered at home. Afterward men and women
[782] disappear into mountain caves, which is called 'warding off
disaster.'"

/100 cont./
000 disaster.'" Volume 6 of Sung-t'ao Chih-li T'ing Chih /Gazeteer
764 of the Locally Administerial Sub-prefecture of Sung-t'ao (1834)/
[113] states: "When a Miao dies, the half corpse /?/ is laid to rest
on the fire bed, near his feet are erected two poles which reach
to the roof tiles. This is called 'ascending to heaven.' The
body is then placed in a coffin. The mourning lasts for a
[765] month. The relatives by marriage offer condolences, the rich
[554] sending cattle and wine, the poor, wine and rice. The clothes
left by the dead are stuffed in an effigy. Those gathered
beat cymbals and drums, sing and dance in response to each
other. This is called tiao ku /'tunes and drums'/. To divine
[787] the burial site they call on a Miao sorcerer. By throwing a
[756] chicken he divines whether a locality is auspicious or not. This
is called 'chicken divination.' Some use a piece of wood cut
[768] into two halves, which is called 'wood divination.' After the
burial, they bank up the earth into a long mound."

According to the funeral customs of the Miao today, when
764 a man dies, three chin and six liang of paper money are burned
782 for him, which is called "money for scattering his breath."
The ashes of the burned paper money are wrapped in a piece of
white paper in a package and placed beside the dead body. A
bowl of cooked rice with an egg on top, together with several
yellow wheat stalks, is placed at the foot of the dead as a
764 sacrifice. Some calamus are picked in the woods and boiled
in a panful of water. A person with a different surname is asked
to wash the body of the dead with the water and to change his
clothes. The size of the trouser girdles used depends upon the
[292] age of the deceased. For instance, if the dead man is 80, then
his belt is made of 80 threads; if the dead man is 60, then 60
threads are used, and so on. /101/ After the burial clothes
have been put on the body, two planks are put on two benches
in the main room in the form of a bed, which is called liu
ch'uang /"willow bed"/. The body is then placed on it, and a
[756] sacrificial table is set before it. A Miao sorcerer is asked to
[789] the house to perform the ritual. The sorcerer wields a sword of
straw, from the handle of which a strip of white cloth dangles.

/102 cont./
764 coffin and the women behind it. The people who carry the
604 coffin while on the way ask the deceased's son-in-law for wine
[606] to drink, without which they would not proceed. Arriving at
the burial ground the "empress' relative" throws down the torch
on the grave, and returns the grass sword to the host. The grave
[372] pit has already been dug by men sent ahead. Now they burn
oiled hemp stalks, which is called "warming up the grave."
764 A geomancer is on hand to mark out the eight diagrams /used
787 in Chinese system of divination/ with rice at the bottom of the
[791] grave, and a cock is let down into the pit to peck at the rice,
in order to divine the good and bad luck of the host's family.
[177] If the cock eats the rice on the left side, then the male members
will have good luck, if on the right side, then the female
members will have peace. If it eats in the center then both
men and women will have luck. After the coffin is laid in the
764 pit, the geomancer, holding a sheng of white, polished rice,
791 stands at the head of the coffin and scatters the rice, making
complimentary remarks. The mourning filial son and others
kneel at the foot of the coffin, catch the rice in their clothes.
After the burial, the geomancer holds a flat, called the "calling-back-the-soul
flag," and leads the procession back, and when
[774] they arrive at the bereaved family's house, everyone puts a few
grains of cooked rice in the mouth to avoid losing the soul.
764 The sorcerer, carrying a bamboo tube full of water, stands at
756 the junction of crossroads or at the main entrance and scatters
water with a broom made of green grass, uttering spells, to get
rid of the tainted air and to dispel evil spirits.

765 After returning from the grave and attending to the dispersal
of all the relatives and friends from everywhere, the host then
must provide a feast for the "torch wine and meat" men brought
along by the "empress' relative." If after they have eaten
again and again, the hospitality is still inadequate, often it
may cause "other shoots to sprout /i.e. troubles/." and cause
[605] trouble for the host. After the meal, the paternal third cousin
[604] /?/ departs, but the "empress' relative" himself remains.

/102 cont./

765 After the funeral, on the day of Mao /of the traditional
calendar/, the bereaved family invites a sorcerer to the house
756 to offer sacrifices to the deceased. A table is set, on which
[782] are laid bowls of meat and cups of wine. The sorcerer burns
yellow wax, beats bamboo tubes, and utters spells. When the
● [787] sorcerer's hands suddenly begin to shake without stopping, the
members of the family think that the deceased has come back,
and they all burst out in loud weeping. In the fifth night watch
765 they offer mi-pa to the honorable deceased, which somewhat
[782] resembles the Chinese custom of hui sha /"warding off noxious
influences"/. After this the maternal uncle about to depart,
[177] ask the host family for personalthings left, such as the deceased's
[604] clothes, shoes, socks, and bed sheets. If the dead person was
[768] a woman, he asks for the marriage portion and the amount
received depends upon the financial condition of the host
family.

766 From very early times the Miao have had tribes but not
756 tribal chiefs, and therefore they do not have different classes
nor differentiated marriage or funeral ceremonial customs.
[569] The funeral for a Miao sorcerer, however, is slightly different
from that for the ordinary person. When a sorcerer is at the
point of death, /103/ two other sorcerer priests are summoned
to the house. When he breathes his last, the members of the
family must not weep. One sorcerer priest climbs on the house
and removes a few tiles from it to make an opening, which
is called "opening the heaven's gate." The other sorcerer
priest sits below behind the deceased, and as soon as he sees
"heaven's gate" has been opened, he immediately lets out a
loud cry, to which the one on the roof responds with another
cry, and thus, the two men, one above and the other below,
start their ritual. It is said that the one above opens heaven's
gate, and the one below shuts the grove /literally, "earth
storehouse"/. This is to cause the departed sorcerer not to
enter hell but to ascend to heaven. After this the family members may begin to cry and weep.

/128 cont./ In recent years,
177 Chinese magical practices have been transmitted into the Miao
771 frontier region, and the Miao also believe in the Chinese shen. Hence, today there are two kinds of religion in the Miao region. (1) the Miao religion and (2) the guest religion. (1) Each of

[648] 1. The Miao call the Chinese "guests" and so call the religion transmitted by the Chinese the "guest religion."

these religions has its own sphere and does not conflict with the other in influence, for both are based on animism so they can exist together.

756 [177] The Miao religion and the guest religion each has its own sorcerer-priests. The Miao sorcerer [pa˥ tɛ˧ ɕioŋ˨] is commonly called the Miao lao-shih /"teacher"/, and the guest sorcerer [pa˥ tɛ˥ ʈʂa˥] called the guest lao-shih.

When the Miao lao-shih performs a minor ritual, for the most part he wears ordinary dress. Only when performing important sacrificial ceremonies, such as Eating Pigs and Bludgeoning the Ox, do they wear caps and long gowns. [292] His paraphernalia include a bowl of beeswax, a hand bell, a bamboo tube, a short double-edged sword, as well as paper banners and a paper parasol. The guest lao-shih wears a spirit /shen/ hat and a 752 spirit long gown when he presides over important rituals. 177 His paraphernalia include an ox horn, a ritual /"teacher's"/ [292] sword, and a willow kerchief. Both the Miao and the guest sorcerer-priests only perform religious ceremonies. For com- 177 munication with the kuei and shen, for instance to find out, in 791 case of sickness, which kuei is causing the trouble, /129/ and then they have in addition a woman or man magician /lit. •787 "fairies"/ who can travel to the yin world to find out. In [755] addition, there are diviners to find out about good and ill *[782] fortune in affairs. To calculate the day of getting sick and to select the date for sacrifice to the kuei, there are the date setters. Except for the Miao lao-shih, the rest of the above-

1 [For an extended discussion of the "guest religion", see category 116, pp 237-297 - ANALYST]

177 /129 cont./
791 mentioned were introduced by the Chinese. The method of
● 787 calculating the date is the same as that of the Chinese.

The best way to understand the religion of a people is to
123 participate in their religious ceremonies, observing closely and making inquiries. If one does not have the opportunity to observe such religious ceremonies, one can depend upon competent and reliable inquiries for recording and study.

776 The western Hunan Miao are in awe of kuei. According
* 782 to the gazetteer of Yung-sui sub-prefecture, there are more than 70 kuei which receive sacrifices in Miao districts. (1)

---

1. Yung-sui T'ing Chih, Vol. 6 /1908/.

---

[114] We have made a study of 40 of them. Although the list is by no means complete, the important ones are covered. Thus we can understand about 80 or 90 per cent of the contents of the religion of the Miao of western Hunan. Among the religious
[177] ceremonies of the 40 kuei receiving sacrifices, 16 belong to the Miao religion and 24 to the guest religion.

The various sacrificial ceremonies for kuei as performed by the Miao, whether they are of the Miao religion or the guest religion, are outward manifestations of mankind's inclination to avoid calamities and seek blessings. The things to be avoided are disease, death, and all other calamities. What is sought is the increase of wealth and descendants. Because they believe that calamities and blessings are completely in the control of kuei, they regard them with great awe. This awe produces respect, and respect calls for sacrifices. Whenever they come across any misfortune, they unquestionably want to sacrifice to the kuei, but even in ordinary untroubled times, at regular intervals, they also make sacrifices to the kuei. The former may be called special sacrifices which are performed because of sickness or other misfortune, or because of a portent; the latter may be called routine sacrifices which are held for no particular reason.

/130 cont./

*782 177 Among the 24 ceremonies of sacrifice to the kuei of the guest religion, the "Local Divinity of the Soil" and "Flying Mountain" are routine sacrifices, and the rest may be performed for multiple entreaties. The following is a presentation in separate divisions of the various sacrifices to kuei in both the Miao and guest religions.

1. Miao Religion

(1) Sacrifice to the Ancestors

769 *782 The sacrifice to the ancestors, called [ʨi˧˥ ɕioŋ˧˥] in the Miao language, is performed generally once a year in every family, but sometimes once every few years, after the autumn harvest. In the event of a death, it must be performed not later than within five or six days after the death. The kuei invoked are called [ʨioŋ˩˥ lio˥˧ ʨioŋ˧˥ ko˧˥˧]. The place for the sacrifice is beside the fire pit inside the house and the time is in the early morning. They set up a winnowing basket in which are placed five bowls of wine, five bowls of meat, with the rest of the space filled with pa-pa.[1] The winnowing basket is laid down on the left side of the fire pit, and a bowl of beeswax and a bamboo tube on the right. The Miao Sorcerer sits facing the fire pit, beating the bamboo tube with his right hand, uttering incantations, the general idea of which is as follows:

"The fifth and the sixth months has already gone by; the ninth and the tenth months have arrived. In the loaded fields the five grains have ripened. They carry the grain back home, the men on their shoulders with a pole and the women on their backs. They cannot eat it all; they invited me to come. I brought soldiers and horses to fill this house; I am burning beeswax, beating the bamboo tube, and have prepared the wine, meat, pa-pa, and paper money. I beg you kuei to receive them, but hold them for the time being without eating them!"

769 ●787 At this point he ceases to beat the bamboo tube and with a pair of chiao-tzu (1) divines the fortunes of the whole family

[1] [i.e. - maize baked into a crust - ANALYST]

769
787

/130 cont./

1. Chiao-tzu, an implement of divination which is made from two bamboo splints. The character chiao as written here is not found in any /Chinese/ books on etymology. It is probably a miswriting of the character chiao in pei-chiao /an implement of divination/; four other characters with the same sound are also used for it. The method of divining with chiao is: The sides looking up of the two chiao are the yang chiao, the sides looking down are the yin chiao, and one side looking up and one looking down are the sheng /"excellent"/ chiao.

one by one. /131/ Yang chiao (both chiao looking down) signifies wealth; yin chiao (both chiao looking down) signifies sickness and calamity. Sheng ("excellent," also written with the homonym meaning "holy") (1) chiao (one chiao looking

1. Ch'eng Ta-ch'ang (Sung dynasty), Yen Fan Lu: "...sheng chiao, one looking up, one looking down." Yeh Meng-te, Shih Lin Yen Yü: "One looking down, one looking up are sheng /"holy"/ chiao."

769 /131 cont./

[787] down, one looking up) indicates nothing is going to happen. At the same time he utters the following incantation:

769 "The five bowls of meat and the five bowls of wine as
*782 well as all the pa-pa in the winnowing basket are all offered to the ancestors, and we beg you to eat!"

At this point the host burns the paper money to send off the kuei, and the sorcerer-priest continues the incantation:

"You have now eaten up the wine and meat. Now we are burning paper money for you! Before being burned it is paper but after being burned it becomes money. Divide it equally among you. Please go back and be good kuei and do not think of coming among mortals. In this world, in the morning and night when we eat our meals, we shall call you. When called, then please come. If, in your spirit /yin/ world, you know of our calamities, please do your best to help us."

[787] On finishing the incantation he divines for a second time with the chiao-tzu, and when he gets the yin chiao, then the performance is considered finished. While performing the sacrifice to the ancestors, the sorcerer-priest remains seated from beginning to end. When the ancestral sacrifice is performed because of a death
[777] in the family, then a basin of water is used, in which all members of the family must wash their hands in order to remove bad luck. The wine, meat, and the pa-pa for the sacrifice are eaten by the family and the sorcerer-priest. Whatever remains is given to the sorcerer-priest to take back with him.

(2) Eating Pigs

*782 "Eating pigs" is called [kue˥ mbaλ] in the Miao language,
[769] which means the "kuei"of pigs." It is the great sacrificial ceremony of the Miao, which honors the grandparents and the house kuei
[776] as well as the thunder kuei. From beginning to end it is performed
[796] for four days and is divided into 14 parts. For this occasion four pigs are prepared beforehand as well as a number of chin of water-buffalo meat. The beef is cooked, and cut into slices, which are

/135 cont./

*782 wine and cooked rice. In addition meat is sliced, and seven slices strung together to make one string. In all, seven strings of meat are put on a platter. The sorcerer-priest utters an incantation and divines with the chiao and sends off the kuei. This is the sacrifice to the kuei of the five grains.
●[787]
[776]

The tenth part is performed at noon, when two "Five-Flower pillars (1) are set up in an open area, and to each pillar is tied a pig. The hind legs of the pigs are bound together with hemp ropes. This rope must have been made by members of the lower generation. Moreover, a cock is tied to a small wooden pillar near the ornate pillars by means of a fine hemp string threaded through the beak. The sorcerer-priest stands under the eaves of the house, wearing a cap and long gown and holding in his hand a [292] tree branch. The host wears a ceremonial hat and a red rug thrown over his body. He first picks up a bench and places it against one of the Five-Flower pillars, holding in his left hand a double-edged sword and a bamboo splint and flourishing the latter as if he were driving the pigs away. The sorcerer-priest utters an incantation to send the pigs away, and after the incense and the paper are burned, the various members of the lower generation come out grasping weapons as in Illus. 61. They bow three times facing the interior of the house and three times facing the outside. Then they kill the pigs and the chicken.

The eleventh part is performed in front of the main house. A bamboo mat is spread on the ground and on it are placed the caps and clothes of the members of the lower generation. Behind the mat there is a bench, on which are placed a bowl of wine and a piece of water-buffalo meat. The sorcerer-priest stands outside [292] the entrance, wearing a wide rain hat on his head and carrying a [482] bamboo cage on his back, in which are clothes and other articles.

[531] 1. Five-Flower pillars are made of pine shan wood about 3 chang long, on which are carved ornamental designs, which are smeared with red and white colors.

/140 cont./

755 After the incantation, divination with chiao is performed
*782 for every member of the family. Next, divination is performed
[787] to see whether the kuei have gone. If the kuei have gone, then
the guests taste a little of the pork, and then return home, carrying with them their share of the meat. At this time the sorcerer-priest and the host both cannot eat the pork. The sorcerer-priest has to collect all the paper kuei, paper flags, and paper money, and burn them up on the main road. Meanwhile, the host kills the two chickens and cooks them, and waits for the sorcerer-priest to come back so that they may eat it together.

/141/

(4) Bludgeoning the Ox

755 Bludgeoning the Ox is called in the Miao language
*782 /kueŋ ɲie˩/, meaning the "kuei of the water buffalo," and is
the greatest of all Miao sacrificial rites. When a Miao is seriously
842 ill and it is found through divination that the kuei of the water
[787] buffalo is causing the trouble, or when a person is childless by
[776] middle age and it is divined that the water buffalo kuei is pre-
venting the Queen of the Nether World at South Heaven Gate to
[231] send forth a child, a Miao sorcerer is invited to the house to burn beeswax, to beat gong and drum, and to make a great vow to bludgeon an ox. After the vow is made, if the sickness has been cured or the son sought is born, it is then believed that the kuei of the ox has bestowed it. Then, it becomes necessary to make
*782 preparations to fulfill the vow to bludgeon an ox. The selection of the water buffalo to buy is most important. It is necessary to select a water buffalo with the four quarters having four spirals /?/ and the ears, eyes, mouth, nose, horns, and hoofs must be right and complete. Sometimes it is very difficult to buy such an animal, and when found, the price is always prohibitive. If the host succeeds in buying a water buffalo at the market, then someone is sent home ahead to carry the news, so that the members of the family can prepare gongs and drums to meet the ox halfway. When the ox is led into the house, the gongs and drums stop, and

/141 cont./

*782 incense and paper are burned. They watch the stance of the animal to divine good and bad luck. If the water buffalo, on [787] entering the house, lifts his feet to advance, with its head facing [777] the incense censer, and glances at the ancestral shrine, then it portends good luck. If the water buffalo is stubborn and refuses to move forward or even tries to back out as if frightened, then it portends bad luck. After the water buffalo has been bought, a Miao sorcerer is asked to come to the house to present the ox to the kuei, and also to beseech the kuei. After this presentation, the family has to wait for the first frost after the autumn harvest to make the sacrifice. When the date is decided it is never changed or postponed.

*782 602 [203] After the autumn harvest has been completed and the first frost has arrived, an auspicious day is chosen to sacrifice to the kuei. Half a month before, four paternal male cousins are asked to go separately to where the relatives live to notify them. The most important relatives are the families of the host's mother's brother and the wife's maternal uncle, who are said to be the "leg-bearing relatives." They are so-called because after sacrificing to the kuei, one leg of the buffalo is given to the maternal uncle's relatives. A buffalo is divided into four legs. The first belongs to the /host's/ mother's brother, the second to the wife's maternal uncle, and the third and fourth are sent to other close relatives. The "leg-bearing relatives on receiving the notifica- [203] tion presents the messenger with a strip of red cloth as an expression of gratitude. Moreover, within the 12 days before the sacri- *782 fice, one must avoid seeing unclean things, such as a dead cat, [783] a dead dog, or a dead person. If this avoidance is violated, then [784] the person may not be in the company of the buffalo kuei. The "leg-bearing" relatives often go together with the clan brothers /of the host/, making up a number of at least ten or more men up to as many as 60 or 70. Also invited are musicians, trumpeteers /?/, [554] and drummers, to go in formation. Wealthy families imitate [177] the old customs of the former Manchu dynasty, displaying official insignia, playing fine music, and beating gongs and carrying parasols. The maternal uncle's family entitled to the first leg

/142 cont. /

*782 After each passage the musicians play their instruments a while. When the sorcerer-priest has occasion to stand up, the four "leg-bearing" men who accompanied the kuei also stand up; when the sorcerer-priest sits down, the "leg-bearing" men also sit down; when he presents wine, they must also do so. From first to last it is done nine times until late at night.

In the morning of the second day the sorcerer-priest orders the helpers to go outside the village to choose an open area to erect Five-Flower pillars. After the pillars are erected they make bamboo rings with bamboo strips and put them around the pillars. A piece of hemp rope is used to tie the nose of the ox to the bamboo ring. The creeper brought by the "leg-bearing" relatives are used to bind up the horns so that the animal cannot hurt anyone with the horns, see Illus. 63. After the arrangements have been finished, the sorcerer-priest is asked to make an inspection, and if he finds everything satisfactorily arranged, then they can proceed. The host then changes into new clothes, and offers wine and meat as sacrifices to the kuei, burns incense
[788] and paper, and kneels three times and kowtows nine times facing the ox. At the same time the sorcerer-priest utters an incantation, telling the origin of the ox kuei. After the incantation is finished, the mother's brother takes hold of the spear and acts as if he were chasing the ox to stab it. The spear is then taken by a young man to do the actual stabbing of the animal. At the same time the din from the drums and gongs rends the air and the ox runs around the Five-Flower pillars. /Illus. 63 appears between pp. 142 and 143./ /143/ with the man pursuing and repeatedly stabbing, until the animal is dazed and falls to the ground.
● [787] They note the direction in which the head falls to decide whether the sign is auspicious or not. If the head faces toward the host's house, it is a good omen; if the head faces away, then it is a bad omen.

After the animal has been stabbed to death, then the meat is divided up. The head and heart, liver, entrails, and bowels go to the host to be used to sacrifice to the kuei. The left and right hind legs go to the "first- and second-leg-bearing" relatives,

/143 cont./

755

(6) Sacrifice to the Kuei of Pimples

*782 When a Miao, whether a man or a woman, gets a pimple
[753] on his foot or leg which does not heal for a long time, it is con-
[776] sidered that the [naŋ˦ ŋuei˦ pi˥˧nu˦˥] and [naŋ˦ nu˦ pi˦ ʂɛ˥˧] are causing it. Then it is necessary to ask a sorcerer-priest to sacrifice to the kuei during the daytime in the main house, with five bowls of wine and five bowls of meat, /144/ and three slender sticks of incense. In the Miao language this is called /paɤ˥˧ pi˥˧ nu˦˥/. The sorcerer-priest holds the chiao-tzu in the right hand, and the words of the incantation he utters merely implores the kuei to bring about recovery.

[787] In divination with chiao-tzu the yang chiao and yin chiao indicate misfortune; the sheng chiao indicates good fortune. If it turns up yang or yin chiao, it is necessary to repeat the incantation and divine again. As soon as the sheng chiao turns up, the paper can be burned to send away the kuei.

(7) Ta Kan Lo

*782 Ta Kan Lo is called [ta˥˧ ʐʻio˨˩ tʻa˧˩ lieŋ˦] in the Miao
787 language. When a Miao at home happens to have a rat urinate
[825] on him, or a hen suddenly crows or produces a soft-shelled egg; or when on going out he sees uphill two snakes together; or when walking a bird urinates on his head, these various phenomena encountered are all regarded as bad omens by the Miao. Then
[791] they ask for a diviner's calculation, without telling directly about the strange occurrence that has been witnessed. If what the diviner finds out corresponds with what one has seen, then the sorcerer-priest must be asked to perform Ta Kan Lo /Beating the Kan-Lo/.
*782 Each performance, not counting preparation, takes about half a day, from early morning till noon. The ceremony is divided into four parts as follows:

/146 cont./

> *782 mountain, behind is the slope; in front are soldiers, behind is the general. Up the hill is a path; down the stream is a boat. Each word and each phrase is to be listened to. Being in the same place, any time I may call your name. The host is sitting at peace, not going to the fields to swear oaths. At the temple he does not swear oaths, nor at home. He does not swear oaths with cold water, and when beating his wife /and children ?/ does not swear oaths. The host is willing to feed others, and does not take advantage of others, nor laugh at other people's sons and descendants. He does not act unjustly, but observes litigations all around him."

At this point he once more burns beeswax, makes a gesture of leading down the Kuei. His incantation continues:

> "If the ta kan lo paper banners and their staffs become disarranged, we ask the kan lo kuei to please
> *782 ●787 825 set them right. These are the strange occurrences caused by the kan lo kuei: the pig goes mad; the dog jumped on the roof; the pig ran up to the entrance; the hen entered her nest to eat her egg; the pig went up the stairs to eat a small child; the hen can crow like a cock; the cock can hatch chickens; the hen laid a soft-shelled egg; the bitch had only one puppy; the pig had a litter of two piglets; the crops ripened in the third month; a dead thing was seen when coming out the entrance; two snakes were seen together; two tigers hid in the house; a rat made a squeaking sound; a snake was seen in the house; a snake shed its skin in the house. The host had a terrible dream, dreaming he was in rain and snow, dreaming he was in the midst of a deep forest. He therefore
> *782 776 went to the diviner. It was found that no other kuei was causing these calamities, only the kan lo

/146 cont./

*782 [776] kuei were eating food and seeking sacrifices from people. A vow was made on a selected auspicious day. After the vow everything became peaceful. After a few days the host accumulated a sum of money. Wherever an ox was killed today up and down the village, with the money he bought some beef and returned home. On reaching home he sent for the sorcerer-priest. The sorcerer-priest has summoned his soldiers and horses and patron saints to come to this house. The wax is lit; the hand bell is ringing; the table has been set up and spread with fine bowls; the paper banners have been stuck up in the place; the flag poles have been erected, with paper streamers flying; a chicken has been killed, and everything is set."

*782 •787 After the above incantation is over, the priest tosses the chiao-tzu beside him on the ground. He studies the chiao-tzu to divine whether the kuei have come down. The yin and yang chiao indicate that the kuei still have not come down. It is necessary to get the sheng chiao, for then the kuei have come down. If the kuei have not yet descended, it is necessary to invoke them again.

*782 /147/ The second part consists of beating the bamboo tube [pa˥˩ ɕioŋ˥ doŋ˩]. When this part is performed, the various arrangements outside the entrance are not moved, except that the bowl of wax is moved inside the entrance to the righthand corner, and the bamboo tube is placed on the ground behind the bowl of wax. The Miao sorcerer sits on a stool behind the bamboo tube. He beats it with his right hand while he utters an incantation. Each beat punctuates two words (Illus. 65). The general purport of the words are as below:

"The host has asked me today to come to perform the Ta Kan Lo, entirely of his own voluntary wish, without compulsion from anyone. The sun dragon and the moon dragon in the skies, the water dragon in the fields. I wear three steel helmets, iron shoes,

/148 cont./

*782 The Miao sorcerer performs the ritual of repenting three times with the knife. He further repeats the performance with a pair of scissors, and again recites:

> [783] "The scissors of the host's family are used to do repenting for the host's sins. After he has repented, he can then receive blessings. These scissors cut only misfortunes but not blessings. They cut the mourning cloth of the host, cut the cord that ties up his feet, cut the rope that wraps around his hands, and cut his coffin. When the host steps over the scissors, he will then have peace and will get blessings. [p'i˦ ɕiɑ˨]. The large scissors split open a bright main road; the small scissors split open a bright path."

After the performance with the scissors, he uses a comb to repeat the ritual of repenting, combing over to the left and once to the right, and continuing the incantation:

> [783] "This sun comb and moon comb belong to the shrine of the local divinity of the soil. With it I come to get rid of the sins of the host. This comb does not comb away the host's meritorious acts but his transgressions. He constantly made vows before the shrine of the local divinity of the soil /149/ and also drank blood before the shrine, with blood left on his mouth and sweating blood in his viscera. The host, after this combing with the sun comb and moon comb, will be at peace! [p'i˦ ɕiɑ˨]. The large comb will comb open a bright main road; the small comb will comb open up a bright path."

*782 ● 787 After the sorcerer has finished with the knife, scissors, and comb, he takes hold of the chiao-tzu and begins divining for the host and members of his family, uttering at the same time the following incantation:

> "The three rites of repenting having been completed, the sorcerer-priest now requests that he may question the kan lo kuei. I request that I may question the patron saint, the questions will be clear. I wish to ask the fortunes of the host's family, big and small, men

/149 cont./

*782 and women, old and young, in their affairs,
787 and about the family's wealth, crops, and
animals, etc. In accordance with the questions
asked, I consider the *chiao* evidence.
The *yin chiao* indicates danger; the *yang chiao*
indicates peace and security; the *sheng chiao*
indicates good luck. Now that the questions
*782 to the kuei have been asked, there is only the
burning of the paper money. After the paper
is burned, it becomes money: he who gets a
lot shares a lot; he who receives little, shares little."

The fourth part consists of sending the kuei away [soŋ˥ kueŋ˩˥˩]. The layout for sending the kuei away is the same as that for invoking them, except that on the table there are added 12 bowls of meat and 12 piles of *pa-pa*, while the number of bowls of wine remain the same. The Miao sorcerer, holding a bell in his right hand and *chiao* in his left hand, utters the following incantation:

"All ye kuei gather here to receive sacrifices in
meat and wine, 12 bowls of meat, 12 piles of meat.
The wine and meat are all spread before you. The *kan
lo* kuei are fond of this wine and meat. Please help
yourselves. After helping yourselves, please protect
this family, big and small. May they be at peace and
without trouble; may they not lose money or rice and
*782 not experience lawsuits; may the cattle not have an
231 epidemic and, while eating grass, may they not fall
into a pit; while drinking water, may they not fall into
the river; while going up the mountain to plow, may
they be safe. Protect the pigs, dogs, chickens, and
ducks when let loose outside so that at night they may
return home by themselves and grow without fodder.
May one of them be a thousand or a hundred. May
eagles fail to catch the fowls. May the host not fall
*782 when he treads on a welter of stones while walking.
May the house not be lost by fire. When the host goes

/150 cont./

*782 The sorcerer-priest again offers wine and meat. Kan lo kuei please eat a lot, once, twice, thrice -- all please eat. After eating, please go home. Hereafter when the host divines by the diagrams or calculates a horoscope, let not the names of kan lo kuei be arrived at again. When the host in the future calculates for other kuei, he must not see the names of kan lo kuei come out again, for he cannot select a day for offering sacrifices to the kan lo kuei. From now on all the omens of the host's dreams shall be auspicious, all dangerous matters will be cut off; ten thousand years of peace and contentment. [ha ji jo ho ho!]

[787] After the Miao sorcerer finishes the incantation, he throws the chiao-tzu on the ground to divine whether the kuei have gone or not. If the yin chiao and the sheng chiao appear, the kuei have already gone, but if the yang chiao appears then the kuei have not yet gone. He must again utter the incantation to send off the kuei, with slight variations this time, such as: "Now, we are sending the kuei back, our thanks to you! On this occasion the wine and meat were not plentiful, which we regret." Then he begins to divine with the chiao again until the [787] yin chiao appears. All the paper money and other paper things are burned, and the sacrifice is over.

(8) Sending Away the Supernatural Force of the Old Trees

*782 824 [776] If a Miao inside the house suddenly hears a strange noise and on opening the door does not see anything, then he thinks that the big trees in front of or behind the house or near the village are acting up. It is the two kuei [naŋ˩˧ ŋuei˩˧ tʻoŋ˥˧ ndu˧˩] and [naŋ˩˧ nu˥ tʻoŋ˥˧ l̥ho˧˩] coming to eat. The sorcerer-priest must be asked to come to expel the supernatural forces of the old trees, in Miao called [ɕi˥˧ ndu˧˩]. At night a table is put outside the main entrance. On the table are placed five

/150 cont./

*782 824 bowls each of wine and meat and a bowl of beeswax. The Miao sorcerer sits in front of the table, beating a bamboo tube with his right hand and uttering the incantation to send away the old trees' supernatural forces. The general purport of the incantation /151/ is to request the kuei to go away quickly after partaking of the wine and meat, for the children in the village after hearing the strange noise are terrified. Among the phrases of the incantation is "kill a goat to sacrifice to the kuei." This shows that previously the goat was also used as an object of sacrifice but now it is spared; the text of the incantation, however, has remained unchanged. After one section has been [788] recited, he stops beating the bamboo tube. He starts ringing the bell with his left hand and continues the incantation. At the ●[787] same time he performs divination with the chiao-tzu. If the sheng chiao or the yin chiao appears, the supernatural forces are considered to have departed. If he gets the yang chiao, they have not gone, and the incantation and the divination have to be repeated until either the sheng chiao or the yin chiao appears, when the kuei may be sent away by burning the paper money.

(9) Cleansing the House

*782 783 If one's house has been lived in by a family of a different surname, the master of the house must ask a Miao sorcerer to cleanse the house after that family moves out, otherwise, the owner after living there would not be prosperous. Cleansing the [776] house in Miao is called [ndzə˧ pəɤ˥˩]. The two kuei invoked are [dei˩˥ 'əɤ˥˩ noŋ˥˩ dɛ˧] and [dei˩˥ ɭɑ˥˩ noŋ˥˩ qa˥]. The time is any time during broad daylight, and the place may be anywhere inside the house, either in the main room or in the side room, facing outside the door. A table is set up, and on it placed five bowls of wine, five pieces of pork, five piles of mi-pa, and five pieces of tofu/bean curd/. A piece of green cloth 6 ch'ih long is spread out on the ground under the table. On the cloth are one or two strings of copper yuan; they also use a cock, whose two wings are tied to a leg of the table. They do not use beeswax, but only use three slender sticks of incense stuck up in the mi-pa. The

/151 cont./

*782 783 sorcer-priest holds the chiao and rings the bell, standing in front of the table, and the words of the incantation he utters are to the following effect:

> "Now we have prepared well wine, meat, a cock, pa-pa, tofu, green cloth, clean water, and ready money to cleanse the house. First we invoke the ancestors of the host. When you hear my call, please hurry down and receive the objects of sacrifice. Next we invoke the ancestors of the previous tenant. The host, fearing that he may not be at peace here, has asked me to come to cleanse the house. I have come with many soldiers and horses. With water I cleanse the house, first cleanse the fire bed, next the fire pit. I cleanse the right and the left of the house; I cleanse the front and the back doors. After I have cleansed three times, the host may live in it with great prosperity, resources abundant, prosperous harvests of the five grains, and the increase of the six kinds of domestic animals. The trouble-making kuei have now been sent out the door, hereafter peace will be everlasting." [769]

● [787] After the incantation has been completed, he then divines with the chiao. If either the yang chiao or the sheng chiao appears, it is auspicious, and paper is burned to send off the kuei. But if the yin chiao appears, then the incantation has to be said again, until he divines and gets either the yang chiao or the sheng chiao, when it is the end. After the sorcerer-priest has completed his performance, he drinks the wine on the table and takes the cock, meat, pa-pa, tofu, green cloth, and copper yuan offered in sacrifice to the kuei, home with him.

[152/ (10) Cleansing the Cat

[825] The Miao consider that a cat dying in the house is an ill omen, and it is then necessary to ask a sorcerer-priest to purify the house in order to expel harmful emanations. In Miao this is called

/152 cont./

*782 [t[illegible] [illegible] -maŋ]. The kuei sacrificed to are [kueŋ maŋ
783 jeŋ ɕiaŋ] and [kueŋ maŋ jeŋ ɕiaŋ]. The time is in broad
daylight and the place is anywhere in the main house; it is only
825 necessary to face out the door. A table is used on which are
[776] placed five bowls each of wine and meat, placed in two rows. The beeswax is not used. The sorcerer-priest holds the chiao in his right hand and utters words of an incantation, which say in general:

> "The reason for sacrificing to the kuei is because a cat died in the house. Since the cat died in the house, the host dares not sit down in this house to eat food for fear that he may get sick after eating; he dares not live in this house for fear that he will not prosper. Therefore, I request the kuei to come to drive the dead cat away."

[787] After the incantation he divines with the chiao. The yin chiao or the sheng chiao indicates that the kuei of the cat has already gone; if he gets the yang chiao, then the kuei still remains in house. Then the incantation has to be started all over again until the divination shows that the cat kuei is gone, whereupon the paper money may be burned to send off the kuei.

(11) Drinking Blood

*782 When two Miao become involved in a dispute about some
627 matter or wrangle about property, and who is right and who is
[578] wrong is not clear, or if a man meets a false accusation in which he cannot clear himself, then they resort to drinking blood and taking an oath, which in the Miao language is called [ɕi[illegible] tɕi
[778] [774] ntɕieŋ]. For minor matters it is done at the village shrine for the local divinity of the soil but for important matters it is necessary to go to the T'ien Wang ["Heavenly King temple](1) to drink blood.

1. See "Sacrifice to T'ien Wang."

/156 cont./

243 *782

> have come with soldiers and horses, and have prepared the wax and the bamboo tube, and have spread out wine, meat, and rice as well as the paper money, and request the kuei to come to receive them."

[788] At this point the sorcerer-priest stands up, picks up the bell and the chiao, and then resumes his seat, ringing the bell with his left hand, holding the chiao in his right hand, and continuing the incantation:

> "Now we come to sacrifice to the kuei of the five grains with good wine, good meat, and cooked large-grain rice, and a lot of paper money, and ask the kuei to receive them. Protect the five grains so that there is an abundant harvest! When the weather gets warm, when the hundred flowers blossom, and when the birds begin to sing, when we sow the five grains, may the sprouting grain be green and luxuriant, and by the fifth and sixth month may they form ears, without being eaten by locusts. May the harvest of the five grains in the ninth and the tenth month be abundant. We ask the kuei to finish up the wine and meat, gather the paper money, and go back. Protect the five grains so that there is an abundant harvest, and the six kinds of domestic animals increase!"

[787] While he is uttering the incantation, at the same time he divines with the chiao, first for the five grains, then for the six domestic animals. The yang chiao and the sheng chiao are auspicious. The yin chiao is a bad omen. After the divination is over, paper is burned to send off the kuei.

*782 [946] [755] Again, when a Miao woman has given birth or someone has a stomach-ache, they also sacrifice to the kuei of the five grains. The kuei invoked and the layout for the ritual are the same as above. The text of the incantation then requests the kuei of the five grains to protect the baby or to cause the person's stomach-ache to stop.

/157 cont./

*782 777 731 of beeswax. The sorcerer-priest burns the wax, rings the hand bell, and utters an incantation, in general saying:

> "Recently the host has run into bad luck, frequently suffering losses. According to calculations, the Black Emperor Earth Lord or /158/ his descendants are seeking food. Therefore, today, I have been asked to offer sacrifice. Please eat the meat and drink the wine. You /plural/ are also promised a large bull. Please give your protection and bring about peace and safety."

[787] After the incantation, divination is performed with the chiao. The yang chiao indicates financial loss but immunity from disaster; the yin chiao means impending disaster without the loss of wealth; and the sheng chiao shows immunity from both. After the divination, paper is burned to send the kuei away.

(16) Handing Over the Ox

If after the sacrifice to the Black Emperor Earth Lord, one's luck is still bad, the only thing to do is to buy an ox and fulfill the vow, which in the Miao language is called [ɲiɔ˦ bu˧ ɲie˨˦]. Once this ox is offered to the kuei, it cannot be killed, nor can it be sold. It is allowed to die a natural death. The performance of this ritual is the same as that for Warming of the Ox Muzzle, except that the text of the incantation uttered by the sorcerer-priest is different, its general purport being:

> "The former vow being ineffective, luck still is bad. The host has saved money to go to market. At the market he looked around and saw a large bull, with big horns and a big body and handsome appearance. The host wanted it, and for a great deal of money he bought it and brought it home. Today has been selected as an auspicious day, and I have been asked to hand over the ox. I beseech the kuei to take it!"

After the incantation paper is burned to send off the Kuei,

/158 cont./
After the incantation paper is burned to send off the kuei.

2. The Guest Religion 1

(1) The Local Divinity of the Soil

776 In every Miao village there is a shrine for the local divinity
791 of the soil, built of stone slabs and rocks. It is said that during
the divinity's lifetime he was good at divination and his disciples
778 were numerous. When people planned to build houses or shrines,
[787] generally they asked him to select auspicious dates. Spending
his whole life divining for others, it was inevitable that some
of the days he selected turned out to be unlucky days. He tried
to select a lucky day for himself to build his own house, but up
till his death he was unsuccessful. At the time of his death he
was without a house, and he died under the stone slabs. He
*[782] said to the villagers while dying: "When you offer sacrifices
to me, any day will do, except the anniversary of the death
of Duke Yang." People remembered his virtue and felt sorry
that he was without a house. So they built a low house as his
shrine. (Illus. 68).

*782 /159//Illus. 68 appears here./ The Miao believe that
[776 the local divinity is the shen in charge of wild animals, and by
sacrificing to him they can avoid attacks from wild beasts.
825] Every year on the second day of the second and eighth months
all the villagers join together in sacrifice to the local divinity.
The offering consists of two cups of wine, a big slice of pork
placed in a bowl, on which they put a little salt, a pair of
chopsticks, and a certain amount of incense and paper--all arranged on the ground before his shrine. Inside the shrine are
lighted a pair of candles and three sticks of incense. Another
stick of incense is stuck in the ground behind the sorcerer-priest.
Wearing ordinary clothes, and waving a knife in his left hand
[787] and holding a pair of chiao-tzu in his right hand, he stands
facing the shrine. He utters an incantation, divines with the

/159 cont./

778

Illus. 68. Shrine of a local divinity of the soil of the Miao.

*782
●787 chiao-tzu, pours the wine, and states the reason for the sacrifice. After divining again with the chiao-tzu, he burns paper to send off the shen.

/160/ (2) The Flying Mountain

778 Every Miao village also has a Flying Mountain shrine.
This shrine resembles closely that of the local divinity of the
soil. On the second day of the second and the eighth months
*782 every year, after having sacrificed to the local divinity of the

/160 cont./

*782 [776] [753] [755] soil, the people have to sacrifice to this shen to seek protection for all the villagers. It is said that this shen[1] is very malignant and can cause people to become sick, but when offered sacrifices it can also bring quick recovery.

Five cups of wine and four piles of money are placed on the ground before the shrine. Inside the shrine three sticks of incense are stuck in an incense burner as well as a pair of candles. Another stick of incense is stuck into the ground behind the priest. Also four strings of money are hung upside down on a slender bamboo pole which is placed crosswise in the shrine. The sorcerer-priest wears ordinary clothes and holds the ritual knife and chiao-tzu, first uttering an incantation ●[787] and divining with the chiao-tzu, then pouring the wine and stating the reasons. He also asks the shen to receive the sacrificial things, and then there is a recess. After this, he takes a small winnowing basket, in which are four piles of beef or pork and a bowl of salted pepper soup, and lays it down before the wine cups. The sorcerer-priest then utters an incantation, requesting the shen to come to enjoy the sacrifice. After the incantation the sorcerer-priest and the bystanders eat a little of the wine and meat. Then an additional four bowls of cooked rice, each with a pair of chopsticks stuck in, are offered up. The sorcerer again utters an incantation and [787] performs divination for every family in the village in turn. After this, he burns paper and sends off the shen, and all eat the wine and meat.

(3) Sacrifice to T'ien Wang

*782 784 [776] In the Miao area, before the Hsiao-shu period /a solar period, about July 7-21/, the two days, chen and szu, are days of prohibition when they sacrifice to T'ien Wang /Heaven King"/, also known as the White Emperor T'ien Wang /i.e., White Emperor Heaven King/. On these days butchering and wine selling, fishing, hunting, mourning, or making merry

[1] [i.e. Shen of the Flying Mountain shrine - ANALYST]

/163 cont./
*782 the Miao, but its origin cannot be traced.

[779] At the sacrifice a low square table is set up in a vacant
area outside the main entrance, and on it are placed three
bowls each of wine and meat. Each bowl of meat has a pair of
chopsticks on it. Also a bowl of water with salt and pepper
/la-tzu/ in it. Still another bowl has a small quantity of un-
cooked rice, as horse fodder. Three packs of paper money are
piled up one on the other, with three sticks of incense stuck in
among the paper money. Before the table is a low chair, on
which is a handkerchief.

/164/ The sorcerer-priest wearing everyday clothes and
holding a pair of chiao-tzu in his right hand, utters incantation.
First he recites the invocation, after which he scatters some
rice around. Each time he makes an incantation, some rice is
scattered. After repeating this act three times, he starts
● [787] divination with the chiao-tzu to find out whether the shen has
arrived. If he gets the sheng chiao, then the shen has already
descended. Then he starts an incantation to urge the spirit to
drink wine. Then he states the reason for the invocation, and
prays seeking the protection of the shen. After this he utters the
incantation to send off the shen three times, each time
scattering rice. At the same time the bystanders burn the paper.

(5) The Kung-an Shen

The Kung-an shen, also known as the Shen of the five
[776] wisdoms, gives protection against many things: such as pustules
[751] and ulcers, flood and fire, the six domestic animals not in-
[231] creasing, and the five grains not being fruitful. For all these
[243] they may sacrifice to this shen. But there are many grades of
sacrifice to this shen, the first grade, the third grade, the fifth
[731] grade, the seventh grade, the ninth grade, and the twelfth
grade, which must be performed in rotation. For instance, when
a family offers sacrifice the first time, they offer the first-grade
sacrifice, and if after three or five years it offers a sacrifice, it

/165 cont./

*782 cooked they are put back in their original places.

The second part of the ritual consists of tasting the cooked food. Wearing the red gown, the red kerchief around his head, [292] and the ceremonial headgear, his left shoulder covered with the willow towel and his right hand holding the ox horn, the sorcerer-priest stands before the altar (Illus. 71). First he makes a low bow with hands in front, and when the drums and gongs are sounded, he joins the cacophony by blowing the horn. On finishing blowing, he holds the horn in his left hand and one chiao-tzu in his right, and, rapping on the horn, he utters an incantation to invoke the shen. On completing the incantation, /Illus. 71 appears here/ /166/ he again utters the incantation for invoking the spirit. When finished he dances with the willow [787] towel. Next he divines with the chiao-tzu, at the same time uttering the incantation to the effect that the protection of the shen is sought in everything, and that divination has been done for every member of the family, big or small. Then, the farewell incantation is uttered, and the members of the family burn the paper money. The ceremony comes to an end. The mi-pa and the tofu are eaten. Whatever is left is given to the sorcerer-priest to take home.

The third-grade sacrifice is performed with a large table and the things on the table are identical with those for the first-grade sacrifice. On top of the table is a chair, on which is put a bowl of rice, into which are stuck a candle and a stick of incense, a stack of paper money, a pile of mi-pa, a piece of tofu covered with a vegetable leaf, and a bowl of wine. On the chair is put another small stool, and the items on the stool are exactly the same as those on the chair. Behind the table they use a bamboo pole to make a frame, on which are hung upside down nine strings of paper money. For each grade up three more strings are added. For instance, the fifth grade would call for 15 strings, and the seventh grade, 21 strings, and so on. As for the rest of the setup, the lower altar and the hsi k'ung are the same as for the first-grade sacrifice.

/198 cont./

2. Letting-Out-the-Ku Magic

754 /199/ Ku poisoning is very ancient. Ch'un-ch'iu Tso-
chuan /Commentary on the Spring and Autumn Annals/, first
year of Chao: "To put insects in a vessel to get a ku, in order
to cause illness." It can be seen that more than 2,000 years
ago the business of ku poisoning already was in existence.
Cheng Ch'iao of the Sung dynasty in the section "Liu Shu Liao"
of his T'ung-chih records the method of making ku, saying:
"A hundred insects are put in a vessel and allowed to devour
each other. The one left is the ku." It has always been against
[671] the law to practice this. The old Criminal Code had an article
relating to "the manufacture of ku poison." But it is still
[683] secretly practiced today among the Miao. Volume 7 of Kan-
chou t'ing-chih states: "Miao women can kill people by ku
[776] witchcraft. It is called "letting out the grass kuei." They
let them out when they are at odds with someone. If they are
let go on the outside of the body, they eat up the five con-
[824] stituents of the human frame /muscles, veins, flesh, bones,
skin and hair/. When they are let out inside the body, they
consume the five inward parts, or organs. The victim suffers
[153] either agonizing pain, or becomes listless, or his skin will
swell, or he will feel suffocated, all means of bringing him
to death. A month before his death the victim sees the soul
● [787] of the person who set the ku on him coming from behind to
give him something, which is called "the hastening medicine."
If the sick person cannot be cured within a month he dies. It
is said that either a man or a woman can learn this. It is
necessary to set up an altar secretly, and to raise a few tiny
shrimps in a small earthen jar filled with water. It should be
buried in the earth beneath a bed in a dark room, or under
a rock in an isolated path in a remote mountain. If this
earthen jar is found by someone and burned, then the practi-
tioner of this ku witchcraft will also die. When sending forth
the ku one may use one, two, ~~three~~, or four fingers. The
poison from one or two fingers is relatively easy to overcome;

301 456 Polo refers to them in this capacity in his description of the journey he took into the southwest of China on behalf of the Great Khan. The I-shu (義疏) says, "Yünnan people call the pei 'hai p'a,' p'a being the shell of the animal."[8] There are in the Museum at West China Union University at Ch'engtu metal objects made to represent cowries and once used as money. Hai-p'a (Cowrie Shell) Miao girls also wear ornaments of silver in the form of cowrie shells.

● 787 Another character, "cheng" (貞), has been interpreted as the fee paid to one who examines the markings on a shell. It might also be thought of as divination by means of cowrie shells. Among the Mo-so of Yünnan cowries are still used for that purpose. A full account of this is given in an article by Dr. T'ao Yün-kuei in the *Anthropological Journal.*[9] There are in the Ch'engtu Museum a number of the Mo-so divination classics from the collection made by Dr. Joseph Rock.

301 Still another character, "fen" (賁), suggests for us by its composition of shells and plants a third use to which these shells are put among many peoples of Southwest China, ornamentation. I have seen an apron used by the Ch'uan Miao of southern Szechuan, the

[8a]

the womb again. After this any child born is sure to grow into manhood. The decapitation and butchering have to be done before the child breathes his last. When the parents perceive that the illness of the child is identical to that of the other deceased children, /92/ they expect him to die, and taking advantage of his still being alive they cut off his head and legs. Otherwise, they believe, the prevention would not be effective. It is said that some ignorant Chinese in the same locality also follow this custom. 751 847

(10) Hair Preservation. When a child of the Miao-I is born the parents invariably ask a fortune-teller to outline his life's destiny. If his destiny is not good, then his hair is allowed to grow until he is six or twelve years old when he has his first haircut. The long unshaved hair is said to help preserve the life of the child. The first haircut is an occasion for great celebration: every household in the village would hang out red and green festoons and send greetings to the parents, who in turn would give a party, killing chicken and pig for a great feast. 787 852 856

(11) The Small Horse Image. If a child among the Ch'ing Miao cries all night without stop, the parents would attribute the cause of the trouble to the passing by of the "sky horse", a colloquial name for the locust. They would hang on the door a straw-wrapped bowl filled with rice and water, and little images of horses cut from the bark of a tree. This would stop the cry of the child. 755 753

(12) Throwing Water and Rice. When a Miao-I first becomes ill, the general assumption is that he has run into some starving ghost. The family immediately burns a bunch of unhusked rice and lights incense and candles in a bowl of rice immersed in water. This bowl is carried

755 outside the village, and its contents are strewn
753 on the ground. When the bowl is taken home and
the sick person is not yet well, then a Mi-la is
called in to drive away the hungry ghost by
prayer.

789 (13) Drawing a Cat. Because of the destruction by rats in the house, the Miao-I often stick up a picture of a large cat on the wall to scare away the rats. They claim this device is very effective.

777 (14) The Auspicious Day. The Miao-I in the hsien district do not consult an almanac but consider as lucky any of the even days (2,4,6,8) in the lunar calendar as well as the ch'en and hsü days of the month. To ch'en belongs the dragon and to hsü, the dog, both of which do not have any taboo. So all the affairs of the Miao-I are conducted on either the even days or the dragon and dog days.

754 (15) Poisonous Insects and Medicines. It is said that in the Miao villages in An-shun certain women breed poisonous insects and certain men concoct medicines to harm people. Men and women who acquire these poisons - women by heredity and men through constant practice - are subject to frequent attacks themselves, ailing all over the body. So they have to eject their poisons to hurt others. Sometimes when they cannot harm human beings they can nevertheless damage woods and stones, for if their poisons are not ejected they themselves will be destroyed. This is a deep-rooted belief among the
754 Miao people. Each time an illness is prolonged
787 or becomes aggravated, the family suspects that
the sick person has been affected by poisonous
insects or medicines. In order to find out
whether the sick person has acquired any poison,
a test is made by placing at night a boiled egg
on the breast of the sick person or beside his
pillow. Next morning the egg is shelled and ex-

amined. If the white of the egg shows a concave dent, then it is a proof of the existence of the poison. Thereupon the members of the sick person's family would shout curses outside the gate, so that the dispenser of the venom would come by himself or herself to get rid of it. Also there are cases where sick persons escape to other villages to avoid attack by these poisonous agents. We have closely investigated many areas but have not yet discovered a single instance of some one who actually possesses poisonous insects or medicines. This is after all pure superstition. But the Miao people believe in it strongly and take every precaution against it. A woman who is suspected of possessing poisonous insects may never expect to be married, and a man who is found to own such medicines is subject to lynching and expulsion. The belief of the I tribe in this connection is less deeply rooted than that of the Miao. 754 787

(16) Feng-shui. The Chung-chia in An-shun believe in Feng-shui /wind and water/ much more than the local Chinese. In the Chung-chia village there are one or two persons noted for their ability to divine Feng-shui such as in building a house and erecting grave mounds, the fortune of the offspring being dependent upon how these are located in relation to nature, mountain and river, and their shapes and conditions. It is further believed that the unusual rocks and overhanging cliffs as well as the green trees and gigantic vines in the mountains are endowed with the spiritual essence of the universe which serves to suppress the baleful vapors of the valleys and rivers. So even though it is known that a certain mountain yields valuable minerals, people will not mine them for fear of upsetting the stabilizing influence of these precious substances. 787 823

Of all the foregoing superstitions the 000

764 At midnight, on the last night before the burial, or after midnight, the man in charge of the ceremonies and the feast makes a report. He states the cause of the death, tells how much clothing (giving the number of each kind of garment) the descendants have prepared for the dead and how much meat, wine, rice, etc. has been consumed at the feast. He also reports, if the deceased is a male and the head of the family, how many fields, houses, beds, chairs, horses, cattle, pigs, sheep, goats, chicken, etc. and how much money the deceased has left for the children and what things are to be inherited by each child. Generally, but not always, the family divides at this time and each son becomes the head of a family.

[782] Some of the meat of the sacrificed animal is placed on the table at this time and the near blood relatives of the deceased who are not descendants eat it. The descendants have been kneeling while the things mentioned above have been anounced. They are now invited to rise. Wine is poured out for the relatives to drink. The descendants do not drink but continue weeping.

764
787 Next morning, very early, the priest throws the two pieces of bamboo used for divining unto the floor. If unfavorable, the dead is regarded as unsatisfied and then they enquire what the trouble is. The possessions may be divided wrongly, the place of burial may not be good, etc. Readjustments are made and the old relatives exhort the deceased to be contented. This is done until the cast is favorable. Then the coffin is carried out and the burial takes place.

764 Before the coffin is carried out, the priest puts a stool over the doorstill. Then three broken bowls are placed on the stool and burning wood or coal or charcoal is placed in the bowls. Sometimes a dry stick of wood is set on fire and used to light the way for the soul. Then the priest shoots three arrows into the house and three outside the house, standing across the doorsill as he shoots. While he is shooting the coffin is lifted up and carried out. The priest says, "I am shooting illness, pain, pestilence, quarrels, and evil things but I am not shooting living beings, domestic animals, or corn or beans. I am shooting quarrels and the places where the sun and the moon set." When he has finished speaking, he kicks over the stool. Some throw the arrows away outside the house and others carry them to the grave and stick them up on the grave to protect it.

While the corpse is being carried out the sons and daughters take the straw off the bed where the dead person slept and burn it behind the coffin to indicated that the illness has gone along to the grave with the dead. If the wind blows the smoke back into the house, people say that the illness has not yet departed and that others in the family may die.

754 An enemy who wishes to injure the descendants of a person who is being buried secretly throws tiny pieces of iron or wood onto the corpse as it lies in the coffin or into the coffin beside the corpse. If these are not removed, the descendants will suffer great injury, so just before the burial a careful search is made and all such things are carefully removed from the coffin.

• 787 Burials must be on days controlled by snakes or rabbits.

766 Because it is believed that the spirits of children, after death, roll hail in their hands and throw it down, making hailstorms, they tie a red cloth around the hand of a dead child before it is buried so as to prevent the child from doing such things.

787 764 Formerly the Ch'uan Miao did not take note of the *yin yang* 陰陽 and *fêng shui* 風水 when arranging their graves. Now they use these principles, which they have learned from the Chinese. Chinese *fêng shui* geomancers are sometimes called in to determine the place and direction of the grave, for they are considered more efficient than those of the Ch'uan Miao. Formerly the graves were parallel to the mountains but now, like those of the Chinese, they are at right angles.

765 For two or three nights after the burial fire is taken to the grave and on the next three mornings afterward food is taken to the grave for the newly-buried ancestor to eat.

In making the fire, twelve bamboo sticks are stuck into the ground on the road or path and six bunches of grass, called *yin pao* 陰包, are placed between the sticks. The grass is burnt but not the sticks.

On the first morning, three bamboo cups are filled with rice and some meat is wrapped up in a leaf. These are taken to the grave and left there. For the second meal, on the second day, these things are taken half-way to the grave and left on the road uncovered. On the first and second days the dead person is merely invited to eat. On the third day the food is placed on the grave and covered with thorns or twigs of bamboo and the food is left on the grave.

775 To understand the Ch'uan Miao memorial customs, it must be borne in mind that the Ch'uan Miao family includes not only the living but the souls of the departed ancestors for at least three generations; also that the person in Hades needs the same things that he does in this world. He must have food, clothing, money and other things, and he will find cattle, sheep, pigs and chickens useful. These must be provided by the living descendants and the dead ancestors reciprocate by protecting the living descendants and helping them to prosper. Offerings or sacrifices are simply food, money, clothing, drink, etc. given to the deceased ancestors to eat, drink, wear, and use, with the expectation that the ancestors will help the

796 After the parade, playing the *liu shêng* and dancing continues and songs are sung. The singing sometimes becomes a contest to see who can remember and sing the most songs. After each song the singer ties a knot somewhere on the tree or on his person so that after the contest the knots can be counted and the winner determined. Of course during these ceremonies the animal that is sacrificed is cooked, wine, rice, corn and vegetables are added and there is a feast.

VI. THE CALENDAR AND THE CALENDAR FESTIVALS

[177] The Ch'uan Miao use the lunar calendar like the Chinese from whom they have probably learned it. There are normally twelve months in the year but sometimes thirteen. The month has thirty days and is divided into three periods of ten days each. Through the Chinese the Ch'uan Miao are becoming acquainted with the western calendar.

787 As among the Chinese, there are twelve creatures with reference to whom lucky and unlucky days are determined. These are the rat, the cow or water-buffalo, the tiger, the hare, the dragon, the snake, the horse, the sheep or goat, the monkey, the cook;[1] the dog and the pig. The hours, days, months and years are controlled by these creatures in succession. The lucky creatures are the cow or water-buffalo, the dragon, the dog, the pig, the sheep or goat, the horse, and the cock. The unlucky are the monkey, the rat, the snake, the hare and the tiger. The days, months and years controlled by the unlucky creatures are unlucky and those controlled by the lucky creatures are lucky. Important journeys should not be begun, sales made or projects started on unlucky days. But engagements should be made on dog and on dragon days, and burials on snake or on rabbit days. The souls of animals are sometimes commemorated in the eleventh moon on cow days.

The seasonal or calendar festivals are as follows:—

796 **The first day of the first moon,** or New Year's Day. New leaves of the tea tree are used to symbolize the fact that the new year has come and tea is made from these leaves. Biscuits or *pa pa* 粑粑 are made of rice, corn, or some other kind of grain and bean curd is cooked. After offering these things to the deceased ancestors, with sweetmeats, the descendants have a family meal at which they eat the same things. The ancestors must be invited to this meal.

The second day of the first moon. On this day the ancestors rest. There are no ceremonies of commemoration and no offerings, although the ancestors are regarded as present. The living play and enjoy themselves.

[1] [sic --Analyst]

776 782 After the ceremony, the bed and the knives are carried away and thrown into a cave. It is meant to place them where children cannot go—on sides of cliffs, in caves, etc. It is believed that if anybody touches these objects he will become ill.

791 The person who conducts the memorial ceremonies is called in Chinese *chi shih* 祭司 or priest and in Ch'uan Miao mo or to mo. To is merely a particle like the Chinese word *ko* 個 and the English word piece in "a piece of cloth." The mo is given presents for his services but he is also a farmer and secures much of his livelihood by tilling the soil. He may be a member of the family which is conducting the ceremonies. At funerals he performs a special ceremony calld "opening the way" by which he opens the way of the soul to Hades and at this time he is called a k'a gei. His ceremonies have been described elsewhere.

The *tuan kung* 端公 called in Ch'uan Miao To·^{3} nʌn^6 is the person who exorcises demons, and thus heals diseases and wards off other calamities that are caused by demons. Like the mo, he is a farmer who has learned the ceremonies required and when the occasion arises he is called upon to render his services, for which he is given presents of meat, money, or some other commodity.

[787] By means of cooked rice, or fresh eggs broken open or some other means, he ascertains which demon is causing the trouble and from what direction he came. Then he exorcises the demon.

791 789 It is asserted that a *tuan kung* can take an iron ploughshare, heat it red, then put his tongue against it. In the initiation ceremony already described he walks barefoot on twelve sharp knives which have been arranged on the ground or on the floor. He must walk quickly in order to escape injury. He hangs up some bamboo sticks, then takes hot *t'ung* oil 桐油 into his mouth and blows it onto the bamboo sticks, which have been set afire; this causes a big blaze. It is believed that this fire will not burn a house, even if the roof is made of straw or grass, although it will drive away the demons. He wears ordinary clothes, but puts white or yellowish paper on his head folded so as to resemble a crown and two animal horns. He takes a cock, strikes its comb until it bleeds, then sprinkles the blood on his knives and on his paper decorations. With a tongue-like piece of wood he strikes on the table to frighten the demons in a similar way to Buddhist and Taoist priests and Chinese *tuan kung*. A second person, called a *ma chiao* 馬脚 or horse's foot, acts as his assistant. The *ma chiao* leaps about energetically, striking the ground with an axe to kill demons and finally kills a snake, a frog, a crab, or some other reptile-like creature.

8: Graham E-5 (1921-1936) 1937 AE5 Miao AE5

the Chinese is regarded as heretical and looked down upon, 791 but the *tuan kung* of the Ch'uan Miao is orthodox and honored. 177 Their practices are so similar that it is natural to suppose that either the Chinese *tuan kung* and his practices were borrowed from the Miao or vice-versa. From the fact that the Chinese *tuan kung* is heretical and is looked down upon while the opposite is true of the Ch'uan Miao *tuan kung*, it seems probable that the Chinese was borrowed from the Miao. But there are many details in the practices of the Ch'uan Miao *tuan kung* that have evidently been borrowed in recent times from the Chinese *tuan kung* and possibly through him from Buddhist and Taoist priests.

There is occasionally met among the Ch'uan Miao a 791 prophet or fortune-teller who is sometimes wrongly confused with the *tuan kung* for the *tuan kung* does sometimes divine the 787 future by means of the two halves of a bamboo root called *yin yang kua*. This fortune-teller is called a so bʌu. So means first or previously and bʌu means to know or understand. Such people sometimes live in caves or in houses in the woods. They say their ancestors are in their homes so they will not permit anybody to enter. Inside there can often be heard voices of people talking or laughing or crying. If a person q os ɐ seʌᴉƃ ʌna present of meat, a chicken, wine, biscuits, money, or something else, he will foretell. All Ch'uan Miao believe in the so bʌu and some fear them.

Divination is practiced by the *tuan kung*. He sometimes receives messages from departed ancestors and from demons. When go-betweens have been called by the boy's parents they kill a chicken to eat and also examine the tongue, the bones, etc; and so divine whether or not the marriage will be lucky. Other methods of divination are through dreams and through lucky and unlucky omens.

828 Whatever is told in a dream is believed to be true. In addition many things seen in a dream are signs that certain 787 things will happen. If in a dream one sees a person carrying wood, the next day he will see a poor person; if he sees a tiger, the next day a rich man will come to visit; if he sees a bird, he will have a quarrel; if he sees a rat or a monkey, a house will burn down; if he sees a pig, he will become ill; if he sees somebody wearing red clothes, he will probably get hurt; if he sees a fire burning, a house or something else, the weather will be fair; if he sees a heavy rain wind, his ancestors are hungry and want him to feed them; if he sees a water-buffalo, he will become rich; if he sees a horse, somebody will die; if he sees good vegetables, he will become ill and have to take medicine; if he sees a black snake, a son will be born; if he sees finger rings or bracelets, or both, or a tobacco pipe, a son will be born to him; if he sees a big tree die, or the sun or moon set, or a tree fall, or snow falling, a parent will probably die.

787 There are many lucky and unlucky omens. It is unlucky for a hen to crow like a rooster, for a large old snake to enter one's house, for a cat or pig belonging to another family to enter one's home, for a bird flying above to drop its offal on one's head. It is lucky for a neighbor's dog to enter one's home. If a person sees an old snake have a passage, he will certainly die. If one sees a rainbow's shadow drinking water (it is believed that when a rainbow appears, it is drinking water) he must not go there and drink that water, or he will become ill. If a dog howls in a mournful way, it is unlucky, for somebody is going to die. There are many more such beliefs.

751 Charms are few, yet they are considered useful. Seven wooden swords are sometimes tied together, marked in parallel lines with charcoal and hung up above the front door or on the ends of wooden beams on the roof of the house to protect it from demons. A nest of hornets or wasps is sometimes hung up above the front door or on a bed. A demon stops to count the cells, which delays him until daylight when the crow of the cock frightens him away—for the crow of a cock frightens away demons. A charm written on paper by a Chinese priest is sometimes used. A neolithic or smooth stone axe may be used as a charm. Sometimes the *tuan kung* takes a piece of paper and strikes it with his fist or with a stone (neolithic) axe, after which it is a charm.

776 778 Among the Chinese the *yin yang* 陰陽 and the *fêng shui* 風水 are superhuman potencies, corresponding to the mana and the wakanda conceptions among more primitive groups. This superhuman potency is assumed rather than theorized upon by the Ch'uan Miao. It is possessed by god-like creatures such as Ntsə, ʐei SΛu, the dragon king, the sky demon, the demon that can step to the sky, the warty toad, etc., and by such persons as the *tuan kung*, the mo, the bo ntsoŋ, and by the demon drum, charms, incantations, the ceremonial crossbow, the *lin p'ai* 令牌, the sword, the seal, etc. The legends indicate that such power was possessed by some fans with which it was possible to fan a person up on a cliff, by feathers which could quickly warm a person or a stroke of which might cut off his head, etc.

774 To the Ch'uan Miao all inanimate things are thought to be sensitive and alive. The sun, the moon, the stars, rivers, mountains, rocks, trees, thunder, the echo, the rainbow, homes, fields, plains, recompense or *yin kuo* 因果 beds, marriage, swords, the harvest crop, the year, the *liu shêng* 六笙, and the sound of the ceremonial drum—all these and many other things are considered to be living things. There is much evidence of this in the legends and it is confirmed by the Ch'uan Miao themselves.

789 fire (demon's fire). Leave the *yang* fire to control the home. Drive the *yin* fire to hades (where demons live). Secure *yang* fire to control the family and make it peaceful (without demons). Drive the *yin* fire to the *yin* spirit (or soul). Leave the *yang* fire to control the family so it will be peaceful. If the fire is a foot high, let water be ten feet high. If fire is ten feet high, water will flood up to heaven and hold down the fire.

(When he has reached this point, the *tuan kung* 端公 uses a bowl of water and as walks along in the house, repeating his words, he sprinkles water with his hands. When he has finished speaking, he pours out the water from the bowl and the bowl on the table upside down).

XXII. INCANTATION TO DIVINE BY MEANS OF UNCOOKED RICE

787 There is a sky pestilence and an earth pestilence so I come to report to the god. (The uncooked rice is treated and addressed as a god). If there is any unsatisfactory matter I shall come and report to the god. If the head aches and the whole body is hot, we shall come and report to the god. If there is any unworshipped demon of the *t'an shen* or ruined temples, I shall come and report to the gods. If there is any fierce god that kills people, I shall come and report to the god. If there is any grass demon, wood demon, or demon of the forest, I shall come and report to the god. If there is any fierce (murderer) I shall report the fierce matter. If there is anything hard, we shall report it. Without something important, we shall not wantonly report. Without something fierce, we shall not wantonly report.

(When the divining is done by rice, use one bowl of rice and take a cloth and cover it well. The master of the house or a sick person blows his breath three times on the rice and the *tuan kung* 端公 rubs the surface of the rice with his hand. Then when he has finished speaking, he takes the cloth off and examines the rice to see if the grains are perpendicular or horizontal and thus determines the good or ill luck of the family).

XXIII. PRESSING DOWN THE DEMON THAT PUNISHES SIN BY PAIN IN THE EYES

789

758 If you bump (sin) against wood, the wood demon will enter you and harm your eyes. If you bump (sin) against wood, wood will harm you. If you bump (sin) against stone, stone will harm you. If you bump (sin) against a grave, the grave will harm you. If you bump (sin) against the stone of the cow pen, it will harm you. If you bump (sin) against a stone of a stove, it will harm you. If you bump

[11 cont.]

764 home, his body lying across the hall. When a Ch'ing Miao dies
his body is wrapped up in a straw mat and hung up with a rope
on a beam in the hall. For funerals performed outside the house,
they build a straw hut and place the body inside. The kinsmen
[292] wear hemp cloth or white cloth on the head in mourning and
cry aloud around the body. This is known as "hao-sang" [wailing
funeral]. Meanwhile the bereaved family would send messengers
to announce the sad news to friends and relatives in distant parts.
764 At night they put up a spirit tablet and invite a wizard priest [kuei-
787 shih] to "open the way" by means of a cock and a bamboo stick
slit into a magic diagram. The priest settles down in front of
the spirit tablet and calls the deceased by the name, informing
him of the story of genesis and urging him to start on his
journey. He too advises the dead how to overcome dangers and
obstacles, how to deal with difficulties, how to recognize cross
roads and to ferry across rivers and oceans, and so on until the
spirit world is reached. After the ritual of opening the road is
764 over, they slaughter a chicken and a piglet to spur the spirit on
782 his way. On the following day at the time of "k'ai-ch'ang"
[commencing the ceremony] (the Chinese call it "k'ai-tiao"),
a bull is bludgeoned as a gift to the dead. (Among the Hê Miao,
a bull is bludgeoned as a sacrifice to a man, and a horse as a
sacrifice to a woman.) At the time of bludgeoning the crowd
wails and cries to the tune of the liu-sheng. The bull is first led
around the straw pavilion three times and then handed over to the
priest, who calls out the name of the deceased and makes the
presentation before the spirit tablet. The animal is then led out to
be slaughtered. Relatives and friends who have come to make
sacrifices all have with them a sheng of rice, a pot of wine and
a basketful of cooked rice, pork and eggs. These are given to
the priest one by one, who in turn calls out to the deceased for a
formal offering. The bereaved family then cooks the beef and
after first offering it to the deceased, passes it around to the
guests. That night all keep the funeral vigil, and sing to each
other songs of piety in sad words and melancholic tunes to arouse
in those who hear them a feeling of sadness.

[27 cont.]

756 all diseases are caused by evil spirits, and to expel them is to
755 rid oneself of the diseases. In case of slight indisposition one's family members would burn incense and paper to drive away the wild ghost. But in case of serious sickness [28] the evil workings of an important ghost are presumed and it is necessary to get hold of a priest to slaughter an animal and to employ magic in order to achieve the desired end.

2) To pray for a son. If man is without a child at the age
756 of forty-three or forty-four he can ask a priest to appeal to the
842 Jade Emperor for a son (the Miao do not believe in the Son-awarding Bodhisattva), or to enter the mountain to pray to a huge rock, the spirit of which is said to be able to award a child. So, in the second and the tenth month, incense is burned continuously to the rock spirit. At the time of worship two bowls of glutinous rice, five or six sticks of red incense, eight to sixteen fish as well as candles and paper money are used.

3) To arrest the soul. If a person is pale, thin and
756 dispirited or overtaken by serious sickness without being able to
774 get up, the conclusion is that it is an omen of the impending
[787] departure of the soul. A priest is engaged to appear before Yen-wang (the king of Hades) to arrest the soul and bring it back. In so doing, it is necessary to slaughter a pig for sacrifice before Yen-wang. After the soul is arrested all the relatives contribute from ten or twenty cents to a dollar or two toward a fund for the making of a necklace or a bracelet, called respectively the life-preserving chain or the hundred-family lock, for wear by the stricken person. At the same time a string of bamboo rings is hung crosswise at the gate together with a piece of charm to indicate that the soul is locked in and prevented from escaping again. Sometimes, a bad harvest is also attributed to the disappearance of the soul, and the priest is asked to slaughter a duck to summon it back.

4) To arrest the ghost. In cooking rice, when the pan
756 shrieks, or when the bucket in which the rice is steamed issues
[787] a shrilling sound, it indicates the presence of a ghost. The priest is asked to slaughter a cow for sacrifice, because this ghost is the thunder demon, the greatest of all ghosts, and to

[28 cont.]
756 appease him a whole cow has to be sacrificed.

5) To rectify an injustice. If A has received injustice in
754 the hands of B and is so oppressed that he has no means of appeal,
627 he may ask a priest to present a petition in the nether world.
The priest can invoke a kind of "calamity ghost" to visit B, and if the latter is still ruthless and stubborn, this ghost can bring about death to all the members of his family, including the animals. To enlist the help of the "calamity ghost," it is necessary to give him a big crab, several river worms, a cock, and a male dog. The dog may be killed, but the cock may not be killed -- it can only be cursed to death by the priest. The crab and the river worms are put in a jar to be buried far away, [29] even in the bottom of a river, to prevent others from digging it up. It is said that in two or three days calamity is sure to befall B's family. If the latter knows about this, a priest should immediately be engaged to divine from the magic diagrams. Only when the buried items are unearthed can the calamity be averted.

6) To prolong life. A priest can tell whether a person's
761 life will be short-lived and he can apply for an extension for
782 him. In the process the priest has to slaughter a male pig and
756 proceed before Yen-wang to beg for more life for the applicant.
When this is granted, another pig is slaughtered to be sacrificed together with wine, glutinous rice and a carp as an expression of gratitude to Yen-wang.

7) To tell fortune. When someone does not know how to
787 act in times of crisis, a priest is asked to make a decision.
756 Important matters such as choosing a trade or a profession, and
trifles such as selecting materials for a garment, all require the decision of the priest, who will attempt to put the inquirer's mind in place. The average person respects the words of the priest. Sometimes when the priest decides that it will be very unlucky for a certain person to leave the village, that person may spend the rest of his life at home without going outside the village gate.

756 8) To protect children. Many families whose children
751 are susceptible to frequent illness would ask the priest to be their

[181 cont.]
796 [769] sticks are thrown into the temple of the Earth God outside the village.

The New Year activities of the Chung-chia are slightly different from those of the Hua Miao and Ch'ing-Miao. On the first day of the year they also wear new clothes and decorate their doorway. At about seven o'clock in the morning they make sacrifices to their ancestors in the hall with several bowls of rice and meat while incense and candles are burned and firecrackers are set off. The whole family, old and young, male and female, all participate in the ceremony as they perform the ritual of "three kneelings and nine kowtows." After the sacrifice, ~~the family~~ settles down to a New Year feast in the hall, after which they stop working and laugh and joke all day. Their restrictions are similar to those of the Hua Miao and Ch'ing Miao. But the Chung-chia have a peculiar superstition that if [787] on the first day of the year a dog should bark after cockcrow, there would surely be a robbery in the village; and if the crow caws first, there would surely be many sicknesses among them during the year; on the other hand, if another animal should make a noise before the dog and the crow, then there would be a very lucky year ahead. All these superstitious notions are firmly believed in by the Chung-Chia, and for this reason early in the morning of the New Year's day all the families would cock their ears to listen to the bird or animal that first makes noise.

[182] On the second day of the New Year, the Hua Miao 241 796 and the Ch'ing Miao would gather their family members after breakfast and with spades on their shoulders and wearing straw hats they would march off to their farms to do a little ploughing and digging, the idea being that this first "earth-removing" inaugurates a year's agricultural activities. With the Chung-chia, there is no definite day for the beginning of farm work, but it is generally around the tenth day of the first month.

During the first three days of the year the Hua Miao, the 796 Ch'ing Miao and the Chung-chia would all stay home without going out for fear of meeting with unlucky events. On the [574] fourth day the villages become astir with New Year visits between

[165 cont.]

585 The ceremonies which accompany the conclusion of a "Méo"
marriage are just so many excuses for feasts and drinking bouts.

When a young man has cast his choice upon a young woman,
584 he informs his father of his intentions. The latter selects two old
men belonging to the family, whom he charges with going and
making the official request in marriage. These two intermediaries,
bearing gifts, go to the home of the young woman and are received
by her father, who offers them food and drink. If this offer is made
within the house, it means that the request is accepted in principle
and that the terms may now be discussed. The neighbors are asked
in and a small feast is held. (If the offer is made outside the house,
it means that the request is not approved, the intermediaries content
themselves with eating a morsel and drinking a small cup of alcohol,
and withdraw without having entered the home.) The intermediaries
then return to the home of the young man to announce the happy
result of their mission and to participate in a series of feasts, which
last for two days and to which all the relatives and friends of the
fiancé are invited. The fiancé receives on this occasion all the gifts
[583] which will enable him to make up the amount of the dowry agreed
upon.

The engagements usually last only a short time. The "Méo"
585 pay no attention to the agreement of the horoscopes. Upon the day
[787] [166] set for the marriage, the fiancé, accompanied by his friends
and preceded by flute players, betakes himself to his fiancée's home,
where he presents his gifts and where a monstrous feast begins which
lasts throughout the day. The fiancée spends the night in her own
house, surrounded by her friends, who aid her in making her preparations.
The morning of the next day the fiancée dons her garments
for grand ceremonies, which she generally wears only on that day.
(If the fiancé is of another tribe, she assumes the costume of that
tribe.) The cortège, formed of the two spouses accompanied by
their friends of both sexes and preceded by "sen" players, goes to
the home of the young man where the young wife is presented to her
parents-in-law. In the tribes where ancestral worship is practiced,
[769] the newlyweds prostrate themselves before the altar. Then begin
the feasts, the dances, and the songs, which often last for several
000 days, according to the resources of the fiancé. The young couple

/52 cont./
851 are eaten immediately, and their blood is sprinkled on a piece
of paper which is then pasted on the wall opposite the entrance
[776] door. Chicken feathers are pasted around this paper in honor
of the tutelary divinity Xa Xing."

I myself made the following observations:

A pair of chickens, a cock and a hen, is sacrificed to
[782] [775] the pair of spirits who introduced the soul of a deceased ancestor into the newborn child (see the chapter, "Religion and
Magic," section on "Ideas about Death and the Soul"). These
[231] two animals are killed by having their throats cut, are plucked
whole, eviscerated, and cooked. Some of the chicken blood is
allowed to drip on the paper of the spirits and is burned while
the spirits are invoked. At the main entrance of the house in
which the birth took place, a small basket is set in the frame of
the opened door, the pair of cooked chickens is placed upon it,
and two incense candles are attached. Now the shaman appears and throws his ordeal /oracle/ horns (see the chapter,
[787] "Religion and Magic," section on "Magic, Soothsaying, and
Interpretation of Omens"), in order to find out whether the
omens may be regarded as favorable. Next he begins to evoke
[782] the souls of the deceased ancestors. For this purpose he lights the
incense candles and puts the sacrificial chickens on their breasts,
that is, with their backs upward, and their outstretched legs
pointing toward the open door. Then he stands erect in front
of the door of the house, with his back turned toward the interior, and murmurs conjurations.

While they are going on, for the better part of an hour,
[521] those present, relatives and friends in addition to the parents
and children, converse with one another loudly and undisturbed.
[854] The mother with the newborn child, which was washed for the
first and probably the only time until it is able to walk, /53/
sits somewhat apart in the room and holds the baby on her lap.
Her husband does the housework, sets the room in order, looks
after the food which is cooking on the hearth, and, in short,
goes about his business. A second child, about three years old,
[853] is shouting at the top of its lungs and is jealously trying to get
his little brother away from the mother's breast so that he himself can drink. He is prevented from doing so, however, by the
mother.

/53 cont./

851 Meanwhile the shaman has finished his conjuring, seizes ● 787 the chickens, and cuts them up in order to examine the omens (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," section on "Magic, Soothsaying, and Interpretation of Omens"). First he takes out the tongues of the chickens and observes the hyoid bones for a long time; then he strips off the skin from the front of the heads and likewise carefully observes it. Finally, he takes the feet of the animals, holds them in the smoke of the incense candles, and also studies these omens. If they are unfavorable, it means that evil spirits are close by, from which the ancestors cannot protect the newborn child. In this case, the shaman must first drive away the evil spirits, and then the whole ceremony must be repeated. If the shaman discovers that only part of the ancestors have appeared, the conjuration must be performed again in the same way at the end of the month. This is repeated until the omens are favorable.

851 If the omens are favorable, however, as in this instance, 608 the sponsor steps forward, and the child's mother addresses him as follows: "May my child one day be as great and powerful as you are." If the sponsor has special characteristics, they are also appropriately mentioned. The sponsor now ties a piece of string first around the right wrist and then around the left wrist of the child. This is supposed to protect the newborn [789] child against evil spirits and at the same time signifies that the sponsor assumes the sponsorship. With the same piece of string one of the child's wrists is tied to his own, whereupon he makes a little speech in which he expresses his good wishes for the child and promises to fulfill his duties as a sponsor. Then the sponsor hands the mother the first clothing for the child or silver amounting to the price of the clothing so that it can be bought by the parents. A modest festive meal in which all those present, including the shaman, participate, concludes the ceremony.

The completed ceremony means that the sponsor will always receive the child /54/ in his house whenever he visits him, and that he will help him as much as he can. Conversely, the same obligations are incurred by the child toward the sponsor. The children of distinguished persons sometimes have two sponsors.

Miao AE5

/54 cont./

851 During my visit to the Meau village of Nam Fa in
608 northern Thailand I was asked by the Meau Tua Sen Kun to
123 assume sponsorship for his newborn son (1). I was told that it
[787]

was regarded as an auspicious omen that I, a powerful foreigner, was present in the village at the time of the birth.

551 As names for boys those of famous ancestors are preferred on the ground that boys continue the family. The child may also be given the name of the sponsor. For girls one chooses at will a name which, like all names, has a special meaning. A sharp distinction is made between names for boys and those for girls.

	Names	Meaning
Boys:	lǖ	pure
	pắu	surety, guarantor (2)
	tšü	has everything
	fö	to have many children to care for him
	tšă̌n	to grow
	păn	to flourish
	tsuṅ	bud
Girls:	tšắy	slender
	yí	round
	ltšay	fearful
	t šắ	plain
	măy	good
	ltšó̱a	green leaf

---

1. Bernatzik, IV, pp. 188 ff.

2. Cf. the chapter, "Law and the Administration of Justice," section on "Property Law."

Akha A04
Miao AE5

/97 cont./

A Among the Akha, the marriage age for both sexes is
582 between the sixteenth and twentieth year.

e) Courtship and Betrothal

M For a Meau boy there are several ways to marry a girl.
583 A common way taken is probably the one whereby a boy loves
183 a girl, she bears a child, and later the parents of both give
their consent. This way does not conform to the demands of
"public opinion" and is therefore not customary among respectable
M families. A second way is to go out looking for a wife.
584 The young man visits the various villages and selects a girl.
Then he goes to his father or to the head of his large /extended/
M family and asks for his advice. The ancestors are queried about
● [787] it by way of an ordeal (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic,"
the section on "Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens").
If the outcome of the ordeal is unfavorable, the young man drops
the idea, but if the result is auspicious, he visits the girl's village
again and asks her whether she consents to the proposed
M marriage. If the girl agrees, she leaves her parents' home in
[836] great secrecy and sleeps with the young man in the house of
his parents. The next day, the young man's parents visit the
parents of the bride in order to inform them of the fact, and
M they send them a pig. The latter for their part also now slaughter
[574] one and invite the relatives of the bridal couple to a feast.
The two animals are eaten, rice liquor is copiously served,
and the day for the wedding is set.

It often happens, however, that the girl refuses to leave her parents' house without their consent, that is to say, secretly. In this case, the young man /98/ asks his parents to visit the parents of the bride and ask for the girl. If the bride's parents give their consent, then everything is in order and the wedding day can be set. If the bride's parents do not give their permission, however, it is up to the girl to make the decision.
M She can still decide to spend a night secretly with the boy in
[836] his parents' home or simply to have intercourse with him until

39: Bernatzik--170 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand

Akha AO4
Miao AE5

/120/

M 764 [114] [789] Savina (1) reports briefly and likewise somewhat differently on the burial customs of the Meau: "As soon as someone has died, the drum is beaten and guns fired in order to drive away the evil spirits. People come to the house, bemoan the dead, and begin to drink liquor and to eat meat. On the third day the deceased is buried under the supervision of a shaman. M [787] [775] [825] The latter tosses a chicken into the air and sees from its fluttering which way the soul will go. The grave is made, about a meter deep, where it falls. The coffin is a hollowed-out tree trunk. A small mound is made on the grave with a few stones."

1. II, p. 229.

A 764 628 [203] [765] The burial customs of the Akha are similar at some points to those of the Meau. As among the latter, among the Akha, too, the guests from the surrounding villages are invited to the funeral by messengers. Until their arrival all work ceases in the mourning village; no one leaves the village, and moreover, as a sign of mourning, even the inhabitants of those villages from which a number of persons have set out for the funeral as mourners retire into their houses.

A 764 Among the Akha the deceased is washed and, attired in his best clothing and silver ornaments, is laid out on a sleeping mat, over which is put a new white cotton cloth. The corpse is put on its back, and, while it is still warm, the toes and hands are tied so that when rigor mortis sets in the limbs will remain in the desired position. It is seen to that the arms of the corpse are stretched out and that the palms of the hands remain turned toward each other. Members of the family, friends, and, in the case of distinguished men, many village inhabitants, squat beside the corpse and around the house of the dead and maintain the deathwatch day and night and utter the lament for the dead. The members of the family go from one to the other of those present, in order to serve everyone.

/161 cont./

775 not died. This information strongly suggests a knowledge of
[761] apparent death. While the corpse is rotting in the grave, the soul keeps the shape of the deceased. Nevertheless the souls are not feared, not even those of powerful chiefs or shamans, as long as they belong to the sib. Since they know no abode other than that of ordinary men and women, there is no realm of souls.

775 Only in dreams does a dead person appear to a living one.
787 Such appearances are impossible in the waking state and are not limited to seasons or times of day. The appearance of a dead person means only that the soul is hungry and in need of sacrifices, which are then quickly offered.

614 In general, the souls of the dead of alien sibs are not feared either. There is one exception, however. During the
775 three days after interment when every soul remains unprotected,
776 so to speak, in the neighborhood of the grave, it may happen
825 that it is dragged into the jungle by evil spirits and is transformed there into a man-eating tiger. If such a tiger is shot, evil spirits take the soul with them. In time it turns into an evil spirit which causes harm. Such evil spirits are dangerous for people who do not belong to the sib, and only for them. If the track of a tiger shows five toes instead of the customary four, it is a magic soul-tiger.

775 Tales of this sort have also reached the valley-dwelling
825 neighbors of the Meau, who now have considerable fear of the
[648] Meau. Lajonquière (1), for instance, writes: "that the Thai say of the Meau that they do not have to be afraid of tigers because they belong to the same family and can transform themselves into tigers in the evening." The Meau north of Nan have the
[763] notion that a tiger /162/ jumps against a house in which a person
[177] is in his death struggle. The tiger takes the soul, which is transformed into a tiger. This idea is undoubtedly foreign, probably of Laotian origin.

1. II, p. 312.

Akha AO4
Miao AE5

/175 cont./

A 776 532 842 All these spirits are invisible, and there are no images of them. The situation is different with regard to the wooden figures standing next to each entrance gate to an Akha village and typically recognizable as male and female (Ill. 45),[1] which, according to Telford (3), are called "Hkow De," the female, and

3. Page 101.

"Bvuh Je," the male figure. They are regarded as fertility deities of a sort, who see to a blessing of many children for the women and are often represented in the act of copulation. /176/ One also turns to them when a woman has a difficult confinement. A [845] Water is then poured over the two figures, caught in vessels, and given to the woman in labor to drink, a custom which is also confirmed by Telford (1).

1. Page 102.

A 177 [776] As among the Meau, among the Akha, too, no attention is paid to the deities of other peoples or tribes. However, whereas among the Meau relatively little has been borrowed from other religions, there are elements among the Akha, such as the previously mentioned swing, which point to foreign influences. Among these, presumably, are the wooden swords and arrows of the Akha children, which may go back to Chinese influence.

c) Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens

M 756 ●787 The Meau believe that there are human beings whose supernatural faculties permit them to have more intimate relations with the spirits than is possible for ordinary human beings. The shamans, called ǵǎ nīn, are such human beings, who sometimes are even more powerful than certain spirits. The supernatural powers come about from a spirit's having entered the body of a person without his co-operation. Through this the human being acquires the ability to see spirits even in the waking state and to associate with them. Furthermore he now has knowledge that ordinary human beings do not have. Accordingly, these abilities

[1] [see cat 116, p297- ANALYST]

/176 cont./

756 [787] and this knowledge are not acquired through learning: the office of the shaman is not even necessarily handed down from father to son, though this is possible, but primarily the shaman is a person who has been chosen by the spirits. Usually each village has several shamans, who, it is assumed, are not equally powerful. [554] Their rating depends on the successes accomplished by the individual shamans. A person may turn to one in less important cases and to another in more important cases or if the first shaman has failed.

[562] [554] Similarly, the position of the shaman does not depend on the sex, although female shamans are much rarer than male ones. Both male and female shamans, when they are not engaged in their special activities, live /Color Pl. II appears here on an unnumbered page/ /177/ exactly like the other members of the tribe, from whom, if they are men, they are in no way distinguished, except for a small distinguishing mark (Fig. 40). The [302] female shamans are recognizable only by their hair style; they do not wear the long hair of the women, but have the head either close-cropped or wear the male hair-style, depending on the instructions given to them by the teacher-spirit of the shamans.

[292] The latter also determines the color of the distinguishing mark of the shamans, a small fabric cross that is sewed on the back of the blouse and is worn only while a ceremony is being performed. /Fig. 40 appears here./ Sometimes small silver coins, usually of Chinese origin, are sewed in two or four ends of the fabric cross. This, too, would have been ordered by the teacher-spirit of the shamans.

428 756 787 [782 776 801] If a shaman is about to die and wants to designate one of his sons as his successor, this is done in ceremonial fashion. He sacrifices four candles and four small bowls of tea to the teacher-spirit of all the shamans, kǫ̆ nǫ̆ kǫ̆ tsŭ, and the three pairs of assistant spirits, tă fŭ yĕ́, lŭ fŭ yĕ́, and săn fŭ yĕ́. The teacher-spirit and each pair of assistants are entitled to one candle and one bowl; moreover, four is the lucky number of the Meau. Now the gongs are beaten and the magic rattle is sounded until the shaman believes that the spirits are present. He now asks them to lend their assistance to his son, whose name he mentions, just as they have to him during his years of activity, for he himself is now too old to continue to perform his duties.

/177 cont./

428 The young shaman chosen by his father does not have to
756 go through any kind of preparatory period or apprenticeship. This is actually unnecessary since his abilities depend on the will of the spirits, and the duties of a shaman have been familiar to him since childhood through his observation of his father's activities.

756 It is the task of the shaman to learn the
●787 wishes of the ancestors and spirits and to make
them known to human beings. The shaman,
[775] however, can call on not only the ancestors, but also the souls of dead strangers. Through them he receives information with which he may, for instance, clear up a crime. On the other hand, he cannot induce them to change their dwellings /178/ or influence them in any other way. It is also im-
756 possible for the shaman to bewitch human
[754] beings or to do other evil deeds by means of his supernatural
[789] powers, just as he cannot influence the weather. On the other hand, in addition to other duties which will be discussed below, the shaman has the task of driving away evil spirits that make the houses and fields of human beings unsafe or those by whom human beings are possessed.

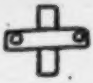


Fig. 40 Fabric cross of the Meau. 1/15 nat. size. Worn sewed on the back of the jacket of the shamans.

756 Exorcism is practiced with very simple means. Since the
755 spirits always have a special liking or dislike for certain colors,
789 the shaman ascertains, after an appropriate ceremony, which color in particular the spirit that possesses a human being rejects.
[822] Accordingly he has a cross of black, white, or red cloth sewed on the back of the clothes of the one possessed, since these are the colors that come under consideration. In the long run the spirit is unable to bear the odious color and seeks another abode, whereupon the one possessed is cured.

There is still another method of spirit-exorcism. The one possessed must sit down on the ground, and the shaman conjures
[787] his teacher-spirit, the ancestors, and the three pairs of assistant spirits. Then he commands the evil spirit to leave the body of
[778] the sick person, over whose head he clashes together the magic

/178 cont./

756 wooden swords (Figs. 53 and 54).[1] Usually the desired effect takes
755 place immediately, the Meau believe. If the wooden swords
789 should not prove to be effective enough, one makes use of swords
[778] of iron or bronze (Fig. 55).[1] Thereupon the evil spirits are said to leave the human being immediately.

756
787 The conjuration of the teacher-spirit and the assistant spirits takes place as follows: the shaman invokes his teacher-spirit and beseeches him to appear with his three pairs of assistant spirits, whereupon he is convinced that they all enter into him. Next he places four incense candles, one each for the teacher-spirit and the three pairs of assistants, on the
[782] altar of the house and lights them. Four small bowls of tea as a sacrifice are put beside the candles. Then the shaman sits down in front of the altar, either on the ground or on a bench
[534] placed there. Now he strikes the magic rattle, which he holds in his left hand, rhythmically against his knees and moves his upper body forward and /179/ backward, while those men at whose request the conjuration is being performed slowly and steadily beat on small bronze gongs. After these preparations have been made, the shaman begins his conjuration and asks the spirit to appear and to enter his body. As soon as this has taken place, he falls into a trance, loses consciousness, and starts to tremble all over his body. Sometimes he jumps upon the bench in magical agitation and begins to act like a madman. Immediately his assistants and persons chosen for this purpose from among the onlookers start holding him, for his behavior indicates that he is fighting evil spirits that are trying to take possession of him.

It may happen that in this struggle he throws himself to the ground and thrashes about in such a way that he cannot be restrained anymore, and he then rolls through the door into the stables. Soiled from head to foot with the dung of the domestic animals, he convulsively utters disconnected words, for the spirits are speaking through him. Every word is given the fullest →

[1] [See cat 116, p 287 - ANALYST]

/179 cont./

756 attention and is interpreted. It is a shorter or longer time before
787 he again awakes from the trance state, depending on how hard a struggle is required in his fight against the evil spirits. In easy cases, he immediately returns to consciousness, but it may take a day or longer before he awakens. It is striking that, even after the shaman has regained normal consciousness, he remembers everything that the spirits said to him.

Aside from the sacrifices for the spirits that have to be
[782] made in the presence of the shaman, there are five things included among the obligations of the shaman: 1. as in the case
[755] described, he has to cure sicknesses by exorcising the evil spirits to whom their origin is traced, 2. he must predict the future, especially with regard to whether some work that has been undertaken will be accompanied by success or misfortune, 3. he interprets omens and 4. dreams which a person is unable to explain
[789] himself, 5. he must make charms and sacral signs (Ill. 97).[1]
[755] As compensation for his work, he receives a piece of silver for
cases of serious illness, but if the sick person is a member of the
[614] sib of the shaman, nothing is paid. The prediction of the future
[465] or of success or misfortune costs only about a quarter /180/ of this amount, as does the interpretation of omens. In lieu of silver money, food, opium, cloth, and the like may be given.

123 As was briefly mentioned at the beginning of this chapter,
755 Lü, the third son of the chief Tsin Tsai, was sick. His worried father complained to me that Lü, his good son, had lost his soul, which had left his body. The shaman had already tried twice to call it back, but in vain. I heard the plea for help in the words of the distressed father, and moreover I knew that several days before Lü had followed a wounded gaur deep into the malaria-ridden lowlands and had even spent the night there. My diagnosis was therefore made quickly, and an examination confirmed my suspicion. Lü had tropical malaria. I was equally anxious to help the worried father and to justify the confidence of the chief, which he was at the same time. Moreover, I did
[126] not want to lower the shaman's prestige by my success, but

[1] [see cat 116, p663 - ANALYST]

Miao AE5

/180 cont./

123 rather hoped to gain his friendship completely and not only 755 observe the course of the ceremony, but, if possible, record it [124] with my Contax. I asked the chief to persuade the shaman to make another attempt and promised to link my efforts with his. I would set up my apparatus and hoped, with the help of the smoke of my flash bulbs, to conjure up my spirits and to enlist their help in saving Lü.

This gave my wife and me the opportunity to observe in detail the activity of all the participants in such a ceremony.

755 782 [276] At about eleven o'clock the shaman came and asked for a small amount of opium, which he began to smoke, while in the house the preparations for the ceremony were made. An altar (Figs. 41 and 43) was erected for the teacher-spirit of the shaman and the three pairs of assistants, and a bench was placed in front of it, over which a cover was spread so that the shaman would have a soft seat. Soon afterwards, a small vessel with incense [354] candles stood on the altar. A small fat-burning lamp of brass was polished, filled with lard, and lighted, for the spirits need light, just as human beings do. There was rice on green leaves, roasted maize kernels on others, and a porcelain bowl filled with water stood ready, as well as a large quantity of spirit-money with a spirit-valve of thousands of pieces of silver (Fig. 46 to Fig. 50). 755 ●787 Then the house was swept clean, and directly /181/ behind the bench in front of the altar a fireplace was erected, with which all was ready for the conjuration.

Beside this fireplace, the patient, the eldest son of the chief, and the latter himself now take their places, while the other members of the household, who have gradually assembled, stay in the back of the room. The shaman steps in front of the [782] altar decorated with spirit-paper, lights four incense candles for his teacher-spirit and the latter's assistant spirits, and sets out for them four small bowls of tea and as many of rice. He then picks up a small bronze gong, to which are fastened two bundles of cloth strips (Fig. 30). The red signifies that menstru- [822] [841] ating women, the black that those who have given birth and have not yet menstruated, are neither to be present nor to see the instrument, for otherwise the spirits would not let themselves be conjured.

Miao AE5

/181 cont./

755 •787 The shaman stands with the gong between the altar and the bench for about five minutes and beats it, and then turns to the door of the house and repeats the procedure in order to ward off the evil spirits. From a small wooden box brought with him, he takes a black cloth, ceremoniously unties his turban, winds it again, and fastens this cloth to it, but for the time being he throws it back over the turban so that his face remains free. Later on, it is to cover the shaman's face, for only in this way can he see the spirits.

Meanwhile, however, he takes two oracle /Ordal, literally "ordeal," but used in the sense of "oracle" /horns from the same wooden box that held the cloth. They are usually the [237] tips of gaur horns or the ends of deer antlers cut in half lengthwise. The shaman sits down on the bench, bends forward toward the altar and throws the oracle horns to the ground, studies their position (Ill. 99),1 picks them up again, and throws them again until the backs of both are uppermost. This indicates that the invoked spirit is willing to appear. Every other variation in the position of the oracle horns also has its meaning:

If the inner sides of both oracle horns are uppermost: the spirit is already present.

If the inner side of the left horn and the outer side of the right one are uppermost: an evil spirit has come along and must first be driven away before the conjuration of the good spirit may begin.

/182/ If the inner side of the right horn and the outerside of the left one are uppermost, it means: an evil spirit is more powerful than the good one who would be willing to help the shaman, and therefore he cannot help the patient.

In this most unfavorable situation, the shaman throws the oracle horns once again in order to ask whether the catastrophe cannot be averted. If now the inner sides of both oracle horns are uppermost, it might still be possible for him to cure the patient. If the unfavorable omen is repeated, however, all efforts are in vain, and the sick person will die.

1[see cat 116, p664 - ANALYST]

/182 cont./

755 All those present tensely watch the horn oracle, which
finally indicates a favorable outcome. Then Chief Tsin Tsai
787 steps forward with the sick son and the eldest son, all three kneel
[782] down on the ground before the shaman, facing the altar, fold their
hands in prayer in the manner of devout Catholics, and beseech
the spirits to come and to help. Now the two sons step back, and
the chief picks up the gong and begins to beat it. In the meantime, the shaman covers his face with the black cloth so as to be able to see the spirits as soon as they appear. With his left hand he reaches for the magic rattle (see the chapter, "Art," Fig. 31), sits down on the bench in front of the altar, stamps with both feet, simultaneously to the rhythm of the gong beats, and, in the same rhythm, strikes the back of his right hand on his right knee and the magic rattle on his left knee, all the while moving the upper part of his body backward and forward rattling sounds, like "brrr" and "krrr," are heard uninterruptedly along with his, and in the midst of it his conjurations in a half-sung, half-spoken cadence. Then his motions slow down, and his words are more clearly pronounced, while the eyes of everyone present hang on the shaman's lips, for through him the spirits announce their orders and revelations.

After about ten minutes the chief stops beating the gong, but the shaman continues his actions. His words shape themselves into an order: "The soul of Lü has traveled beyond the clouds; evil spirits are holding it, preventing its return. Sacrifice a pig."

755 The eldest son immediately fetches a small pig and puts
the sacrificial /183/ animal upon a second bench behind the
782 shaman. Other members of the family hold the animal firmly
[231] by the snout. The eldest son cuts its throat, and someone
catches the blood spurting from the veins in a bowl. The chief
dips spirit-money (Fig. 46 to Fig. 50) into the blood and burns
it with the pious words: "Spirits, I offer you my pig. Enjoy
755 eating it and help my son get well!" He then takes the spirit-sword (Fig. 55) and with it draws a line on the ground, which
clearly includes the place of sacrifice in the altar area and

/185 cont./

755 corners. Then the chief burns the sacrificial money again in order to drive out the evil spirit in this way also.

Another hour passes without anything special happening. During this time the shaman continues his conjurations and rhythmical movements without interruption. Then at last he removes the black cloth from his face and with this the conjura-
● [787] tions come to an end. He is bathed in sweat. Nevertheless he picks up the oracle horns in order to ascertain whether the ceremony has had the desired result. Next he passes his magic rattle around the light and around the incense candles on the altar and thanks his teacher-spirit and the assistant spirits. With the patient between them, the chief and the eldest son step before the altar, bow to the ground with folded hands, and thank the spirits and the shaman for their help.

[123] I subsequently actually cured the patient with plasmochin and atabrine.

756 Other authors have also mentioned the shaman and his activities according to their own attitudes and the regions visited. Baron von Eickstedt, for instance, impressively describes a ceremony with a shaman, and Savina (1) remarks on this subject:

1. II, p. 257.

[596] "In everyday life the head of the family maintains relations with the world of spirits. Only on solemn occasions are the shamans called in. They are at the same time priests, physicians, mag-
magicians, soothsayers, and diviners. As priests they appear
756 only at burials and in time of war. When someone dies, the
764 txi neng is called immediately. When he arrives, he dresses the corpse and arranges everything in the house: the time when people are to weep or play the creng (mouth organ) or beat the
[782] drum. He also says how many buffalo or cattle are to be slaughtered. He recites before the dead the old traditions about the creation of human beings, death, ascension, /186/ and judgment. When the ceremonies are over, the corpse is put on a bed of state outside. At the moment when the last buffalo is slaughtered, the shaman takes the rope and places it between

/186 cont./
756 the hands of the dead." (In this connection I refer to my remarks
[764] concerning this author and the objectives of his investigation in
the chapter, "Myths and Fairy Tales," pp. 302-303.)

Lajonquière (1) gives the following portrayal: "Among the
Meau there are some individuals, half priests and half sorcerers,
without a cult or ordination, who, however, ascribe to themselves
[787] supernatural powers. They close their eyes and release their
soul from the mortal body so that it may make contact with the
spirits in the depths of the earth. As special clothing, the
sorcerers merely have a white veil which they put over their
faces before the ceremony. Music and dancing play an important role in this, but it always ends with an elaborate feast."

According to the data of the various authors cited and my
[114] own observations, an error must be involved when Dhuraratsadorn (2)
writes that the Meau have no priests at all. At any rate, I could
find a very clear separation of the activities of the male and
female shamans from those of the other Meau, who, to be sure,
also perform various magical procedures. Among them there is
789 the hunting magic, which is practiced by successful hunters both
224 among the Akha and the Meau without requiring the help or
223 the presence of the shaman. For this magic the hunter must
smear the front part of his crossbow with the blood of the slain
animal. He then glues a few hairs or feathers, depending on
whether a bird or other game is involved, to the blood and now
believes that he will soon again be equally successful with the
756 weapon. It is possible that such magical procedures which are
feasible for every Meau have led to the view that this people
has no individuals who can be regarded expressly as priests, that
is, shamans. On the contrary, the activity of the shamans is
very extensive.

1. II, p. 313.

2. Page 172.

/186 cont./

755 On the day immediately following the conjuration described,
789 I experienced another instance of the assistance of the shaman in
cases of illness. This concerned the sick woman who /187/ had
asked the shaman for his help during the conjuration of the soul
of Lü, and therefore it was not a matter of a sacrifice satisfactory
to the spirits, but rather the exorcisism of the evil spirit from
the house afflicted by sickness, and the creation of a guardian
[776] spirit such as has already been discussed (see the section, "Deities
and Spirits," in this chapter).

[787] At this spirit-exorcism the beginning of the ceremony was
identical with the one of the previous day. While the shaman was
in an hour-long trance, the sick woman stood behind him on two
spirit-papers, and the chief again burned spirit-money, drew the
dividing lines on the ground with the sword, spat water in all
directions, and scattered the maize kernels. Suddenly the shaman
stopped his twitching and rhythmical movements; his rattling
sounds ceased. We learned that the spirit had become too tired
[787] to answer and that he would have to be re-awakened. For this
purpose the head of the house stepped up to the shaman and
struck him on the shoulder. Once more the monotonous conjuration formulas and the twitching of the shaman began. In the
meantime, the head of the house tied a string to the young dog
to be sacrificed. Then the shaman lighted a straw torch, threw
gunpowder into the flames so that they flared up hissingly, spoke
accompanying words of conjuration, and walked around the sick
woman a few times with the burning torch. He was preceded by the
man with the young dog, and at his side walked a young man
carrying the gunpowder in an inverted bronze gong. This small
procession stepped out of the door and walked around the house
several times, while from time to time the shaman threw the
proffered gunpowder into the torch (Ill. 102),[1] spat in all directions,
murmured prayers, and, whenever the flame hissed up, shouted:
"Off with you, evil spirit!" Smoke and stench enveloped the
house, which, evidently, was supposed to drive away the evil
spirit. The sacrificial animal, however, was led around the
house so that the guardian spirit would recognize the area it was
to watch. The procession came to a halt. In front of the

[1] [See cat 116, p704 - ANALYST]

/187 cont./

755 entrance to the house the shaman cut the throat of the young dog
789 (Ill. 101)[1] and caught the blood in leaves. With the blood he
then drew a cross on the backs of the head of the household and
each of the other members and smeared some blood on the door
[787] posts. /188/ Finally, he once more threw the oracle horns and
burned a quantity of spirit-money as a sacrifice.

756 On another occasion we were able to observe the activity
787 of a female shaman. This involved the invocation of the Father-
Mother spirit, who, as soon as the rice is ripe, according to the
[776] Meau, moves away in order to be ready for the New Year's festival.
Now this spirit had supposedly returned and would be asked by the female shaman to bring blessings to the occupants of the house. Outwardly there is little difference from the activity of a male shaman. It was striking to us that the female shaman used not two, but four oracle horns. At this ceremony, too, there was a struggle with evil spirits. Whenever the female shaman in her exertions jumped upon the bench to indicate that an evil spirit was present, the head of the household scattered maize and his wife spat water in the four directions. Despite the fact that everything was carefully observed and care was taken to scatter the kernels and spit out the water in the prescribed way, the evil spirit would not yield. Finally, the head of the household seized the spirit-sword hanging on the wall by the altar and stuck it into the ground in front of the altar. The female shaman had actually fallen into a deep trance and had to be awakened very laboriously by being pounded on the back by the head of the household after the conjuration was over.

756 Besides this kind of activity, obviously recognizable as a
789 priestly performance, there falls to the shaman, but not ex-
clusively to him alone, the making of spirit-paper (Ill. 84, 85)[2]
and thus spirit-money. Moreover, the shaman is obliged to make certain amulets and talismans, although many other Meau know how to make various such means of protection against the evil spirits. The ingredients are obtained from flowers and plants. Small triangular cloth bags are filled with the mixture. Such amulets are worn on a string around the neck or attached to the silver neck-ring itself.

[1] [See cat 116, p666 - ANALYST]
[2] [" " ", p598 - "]

39: Bernatzik--258 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand

Miao AE5

/189 cont./

● 787 [756] The Meau ascribe extraordinary importance to various omens, whose number is almost legion. There are many omens that only the shaman knows how to interpret, while a great number is known to every Meau and he can interpret them himself and act accordingly. For example a field is abandoned if bad [241] omens appear, an /190/ accident occurs, or the crop fails, since one concludes from this that evil spirits are in it.

243 787 When a rice field is laid out, a person must be specially careful, and he does not by any means limit himself to the sacrificial festivals for the protective spirits described above, since the welfare of a Meau community depends upon the yield from the fields. The Meau live on the field products and the [433] booty from hunting; their dwellings and villages stand in the midst of forest areas. Hence it is not surprising that the behavior [825] and the presence or the absence of various animals are believed to be omens. In the search for a suitable location no muntjac may be seen or heard. If this obstacle is met successfully, it may still happen that when the first tree is felled, a turtle or a snake appears. In that case only swift flight can save one, for it means [776] that the dwelling of a spirit has been destroyed.

342 787 825 The omens which have to be heeded when a house is built are equally numerous. One may neither see a snake nor hear the "shriek" of a muntjac. Even the cry of a black squirrel is a bad omen. If none of these bad omens were noticed and if no bird dropped his excrement on the site chosen, the house and its occupants will be blessed.

224 787 825 In view of all this, it is self-evident that the Meau hunters, too, have absolute faith in the omens with which they are familiar. If one sets out to hunt and sees a snake or a muntjac, the undertaking is immediately called off. If one nevertheless wanted to proceed to hunt, he must expect to be killed by a wounded buffalo or elephant.

The muntjac plays an important and always unfavorable role. Merely its "shriek" is enough; the hunter who hears it believes that he cannot expect to bag any game.

/190 cont./

224 If the hunter tracks a wounded animal and, while camping
787 at night, hears the cry of the large black squirrel, he assumes
● that the game has died in the meantime. If a spider spins its
825 web over the place of a hunter's fire, he infers from this that
he will soon bag some game.

787 It is regarded as a bad omen when a bird alights in a camp
825 /191/ set up in the jungle. If the bird should perch on the tree
under which one is resting and if, in addition, he is hit by its
droppings, this is regarded as the most unfavorable omen
imaginable. Strangely enough, omens are not linked with the
conspicuous and common hornbill, whose plaintive call astonishes
every stranger, even if he has not yet seen the grotesque appearance of the bird, and which plays an especially important role
among head-hunting peoples. Monkeys, lizards, frogs, and fish
[821] likewise have little significance among the Meau, and heavenly
phenomena, too, are not connected with omens. Similarly there
754 are no practitioners of black magic among the Meau, although
829 the concept is generally known. For instance, it is believed that
among the neighboring peoples in the valleys, especially among
the Chinese and Lao, such magicians who are able to do harm to
human beings are very common.

787 The art of soothsaying is also known to the Meau. The belief is that it is neither inheritable nor can it be taught, but that it simply depends on the will of the spirits which person is endowed with this faculty. And there is no means by which the will of the spirits can be influenced in this respect.

Great importance is ascribed to dreams since it is assumed --
as has been said -- that in sleep the soul goes wandering and
therefore dreams are nothing but the experiences of the soul while
a person is asleep. The interpretation of dreams is also the
[756] business of the shaman, but, as in the case of omens, there are
some dreams, too, that every Meau interprets in the same way.

In general it is assumed that one's parents will die if he
[763] dreams that he is losing his teeth. In this connection it is
[171] interesting to note that the idea of a sinister meaning of a dream
in which teeth play a role is also found among the Lao and
Chinese, as well as in Europe.

/191 cont./

787 If a Meau dreams that his house is on fire or that he is fleeing, it bodes ill fortune for the inhabitants of the house in which the sleeper is resting. It is likewise unfavorable to dream of tigers or an inundation. Misfortune is likewise imminent if in a dream a tree, a horse, or a cow falls.

If in a dream one sees people engaged in pounding rice, /192/ then all depends on the color of the rice. If it is white, it is regarded as a good omen, whereas black rice is regarded as a bad omen.

Special good luck is indicated by dreams in which one sees a hen with many chicks or people in new clothes, or shallow water, or if one dreams that a new year has begun.

787 851 Besides the attention given to the omens described and
others, and to dreams and soothsaying, an oracle /Ordal, literally
"ordeal," but used here in the sense of "oracle"/ is also consulted
among the Meau, as was described above in connection with the
conjurations by the shaman in the chapter, "Life in the Community,"
the section on "Naming and Admission into the Family Community."
[123] It will be recalled that in every case my presence in the village,
as that of an influential stranger, was regarded as a good omen,
and, after the oracle had been consulted, I was asked to be the
sponsor of the newborn little boy. At that time, the chicken
oracle was used, whose procedure I have already described. If
the skin on the head of one or both animals of the sacrificed pair
of chickens had been black or spotted black, if the hyoid bones of
one of the animals had not been parallel or if the chickens' toes
had not run together toward the front, but instead had stood out
sideways, especially the first or third toe, everybody would have
been convinced that the ancestors would not be able to protect
the child against the evil spirits that were present and that these
would have to be exorcised before the child could be received
into the family community. On the other hand, if two of the
omens had been good and one bad, this would have been regarded
as a warning sign, indicating that great caution was needed. In
[609] such case any stranger would have been denied entry into the
787 house of the newborn baby. Thus, as this witnessed example
indicates, among the Meau there is a direct connection between

/192 cont./
● 787 general omens and those of the oracle. The oracle with the pair
of chickens is used not only in connection with the birth of a
child, but also on other occasions, and it has the advantage that
from the combination of its omens one can see not only the good
and the bad aspects, but also to what extent human beings will
be able to intervene and avert evil.

The greatest importance is ascribed to oracles. The belief
in the reliability of omens and oracles is so /193/ extensive that
the Meau literally do not undertake anything without consulting
the spirits and immediately give up any plan in case of an un-
favorable answer. When I asked a female shaman to draw something
[125] for me on the sheet of paper that I provided for my psychological
investigations, she laid out an oracle to learn from her teacher-
spirit whether and what she should draw! Only then did she take
my sheet of paper and draw.

439 Once every year some Chinese traders (see the chapter,
"Trade") visit the remote and widely scattered Meau villages
787 in order to do business by selling goods that they bring along and
by buying various products of the Meau. On these occasions it not
infrequently happens that all the trouble and expense on the part
of the traders has been in vain, even though the Meau for their
part would have been happy to do business with them. Before any
[437] trading, however, the oracle is invariably consulted, for no Meau
is going to sell pigs or opium or buy silver without first consulting
the spirits. If the oracle predicts an unfavorable outcome, the
Chinese trader has no choice but to leave the village without
having transacted any business; his long and arduous journey with
porters was in vain, for he can do nothing to induce the Meau to
change their minds.

123 Even I had to submit to the verdict of the oracle, if I could
224 not find a convincing way out. For example, Chief Tsin Tsai,
[787] whose son Lü had regained his health through my plasmochin-
atabrine treatment after the conjuration, had put me under his
special protection out of gratitude. Tsin Tsai was an excellent
and passionate hunter. When I noticed that he was annoyed by
our constant questioning or our requests for food, I proposed to
[324] him, the best gunsmith for miles around, by the way, that we

39: Bernatzik--262 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand

Miao AE5

/193 cont./

123 go hunting together, and immediately Tsin Tsai was again
224 favorably disposed toward me. We would set out to hunt ele-
[326] phants, gaur, and other big game which, with his primitive guns,
he was able to kill only at the risk of his life. His passion for
[411] hunting was so great that, even at the time of the harvest, he
would drop everything in order to accept my invitation. Need-
[411] less to say, Tsin Tsai also knew how to handle the crossbow, the
most important and favorite weapon of the Meau, or poisoned
arrows, with which any game can be brought down. My high-
power rifle, /194/ however, aroused general admiration, and
Tsin Tsai in particular could not get his fill of looking at it; he
repeatedly picked it up and stroked it lovingly.

The Meau are familiar with the habits of game to a remarkable degree, naturally far more so than we Europeans. Just as I always deferred to the natives while hunting in the tropics, here, too I followed the instructions of the bold Meau hunters. They know the weather and the wind directions in relation to the haunts of the game; they are familiar with the scarce sources of salt in the primeval forest, which are regularly visited by all the wild animals; they know whether and at what time of the day or night the various species of animals seek out the waterholes or the salt licks; they deduce from the tracks of a wounded animal when it will take cover; in a word, they know the answers to all the questions that are involved in success for a hunter in the primeval forest.

123 Chief Tsin Tsai in particular was able to answer the most
224 incredible questions. After a short time I myself relied com-
787 pletely upon what he said. In order to be able to judge the ex-
● tent of the knowledge possessed by this excellent hunter, I constantly posed new and more difficult questions, which nevertheless were always answered. When I tried, as far as possible, to verify his statements, I soon, to my surprise, found contradictions and inaccuracies. Finally, however, this inexplicable situation was clarified for me, when I discovered Tsin Tsai engaged in having my questions answered by the spirits by means of oracles! Apparently the spirits were less well informed about the living habits of the animals than the living Meau were!

/194 cont./

123 224 787 As far as I was concerned, the situation was difficult if not actually perilous if I wanted to remain on good terms with the Meau. I could not contradict the spirits and had to follow their orders, which were transmitted to me through the mouth of the chief. Hence it was of utmost importance for me to become thoroughly familiar with the pertinent customs of the Meau. One day Tsin Tsai asked me to accompany him on a gaur hunt. A Meau had wounded a splendid old gaur, but was afraid, and very justifiably so, as I soon discovered, to track down this solitary beast in the difficult terrain. Therefore, /195/ he stopped the pursuit, returned to the village, and reported the facts to the chief. A few hours later, we, the chief, my interpreter, and I, were standing at the spot of the shooting. We had no difficulty in finding the path of flight of the heavy animal. We followed it until it led into an impenetrable thicket, which, as dense secondary growth, covered a rice field abandoned some six years earlier.

With our chopping knives we laboriously started cutting our way through the thicket and could not see two meters ahead. Added to that, the wind changed direction every few minutes. Under these circumstances tracking down an old, as well as wounded, solitary animal was tantamount to suicide. To judge by the trail which led up a steep hillside, it was highly improbable that the animal had died, but, on the other hand, reasonably certain that sooner or later we would be attacked by the wounded buffalo, without being able to parry such an attack by the wounded animal even halfway successfully at this short distance without having the shot pass out of the animal's body.

From the viewpoint of the hunter, Tsin Tsai had evidently committed an error, which surprised me. I drew his attention to the dangers that surrounded us. Tsin Tsai calmly confirmed my observations, but nevertheless held the opinion that, in spite of everything, no danger could threaten us, and, indeed, we were certain to be successful, for he had consulted the spirits by means
[782] of the oracle and had even sacrificed a pig to them before we set out, and all the omens had been favorable! Naturally, I could not call the spirits liars, much less question their power. On the

/195 cont./

123 224 787 other hand, I had no desire to pursue such a hopeless affair for which I was not responsible. Only strategy could help. Amiably I turned to Tsin Tsai: "Your spirits were right. I, too, however, questioned my hunting spirit. He told me that he would have to go up into the clouds and therefore could not assist me. He advises me therefore to stop the pursuit." The chief understood this immediately. The hunt was immediately called off, and without protest we were able to start back, for Tsin Tsai had no intention of exposing me to danger.

/196/ Another time -- but by no means always -- I was successful in using my influence to overcome bothersome hindrances which the oracle made for us. One day, I could not do any ethnographic fieldwork because my informants were not available. I therefore wanted to go hunting with a Meau, who for his part was very much in favor of my proposal. Beforehand, however, he wanted to consult the oracle as to whether the undertaking planned should be done at this time. Naturally, I feared difficulties again, but I quickly found a way out. I reminded the Meau that he had just laid out the oracle a few days before and that the spirits had told him that we would kill the gaur which I now wished to hunt. The spirits would certainly be annoyed by his asking again. Fortunately that satisfied my Meau; he gave up the oracle and set out with me.

I myself, however, tried to obtain answers through the oracle of the Meau, in order to familiarize myself in every way with their ideas. In one case I wanted to know whether I would have a chance to shoot a certain old bull elephant whose haunt was known to me and to the chief. The chief lighted a fire, burned three pieces of the spirit-money which he carried with him, whittled three small bamboo sticks, and held them between the thumb and index finger of his right hand. Then he drew them through the fire several times, held them up toward the sky, and, while these preparations were going on, began conjuring the great Father-Mother spirit. He informed him that [782] he had sacrificed spirit-money and asked for answers to the following questions: Whether th[illegible]ll elephant was occupying its usual haunt at the present time, whether I would be able to shoot it,

/196 cont./

123 224 787 and whether, after the shot, we would be able to get the booty. With each question, Tsin Tsai pointed to one of the sticks in order to communicate to the spirit in this way the significance of each stick. He then bent each stick with his thumb nail at intervals of about three centimeters, until he finally held all of them in his hand in the manner shown in Ill. 98[1] as triangles and scrutinized them carefully. The position of the upper side of the first stick which stood for the haunt of the bull elephant, was horizontal, which indicated the unchanged position, that is, the unchanged /197/ haunt of the bull. If the point of this side had been turned away from the sacrificer, it would have meant that the bull had moved away. The point of the second stick, which was supposed to answer the question regarding the shot, was turned toward the sacrificer, which meant an affirmative answer. The reverse position would have indicated that I would not have a chance to shoot. The upper side of the third stick was likewise turned toward the sacrificer, thus this question, too, was answered affirmatively, and we could therefore count on seizing the game.

We eagerly set out on the hunt. We actually found the bull in its haunt, and we stalked it until we were about 20 paces from it. Through the bush I repeatedly saw the outlines of the enormous gray mass. Only once, however, for a fraction of a second would I have been able to fire a fatal shot. Under these circumstances I could not make up my mind to follow the advice of the chief, who actually trembling with buck fever, demanded, with reference to the predicted outcome, that I shoot at the bull through the tangle of vegetation. The giant animal escaped unharmed when the wind turned for a moment and carried our scent to him. Thus at the last moment I failed to put the oracle to a definite test, but it seemed wiser to me to trust my hunter's instinct.

On another occasion we discovered a salt spring in the primeval forest, which, of course, was the meeting place for much game. After I had shot a fine gaur, however, the rest of the game seemed to have been blown away. Tsin Tsai decided to consult the high Father-Mother spirit about our further hunting prospects and set up his stick oracle, conducting his ceremonial performance in the same way as previously described. This

[1] [See cat 116, p 663 - ANALYST]

/197 cont./
123 time he used seven sticks since he directed the following seven
224 questions to the great Father-Mother spirit: whether we had a
787 chance 1. to shoot tigers, 2. elephants, 3. buffalo, 4. deer; 5. whether the old bull elephant that we had pursued in vain into the thicket several days ago still remained at the same location, 6. whether a splendid old gaur that traveled alone and stayed in the thickets of abandoned rice fields in the vicinity of our Meau village could be slain by us; 7. my interpreter asked whether his wife and his newborn baby /198/ were doing well. As may be seen, the questions were posed in such a way that the answer had to be either yes or no.

Tsin Tsai now took the sticks one by one, bent them with his thumbnail ten or eleven times at intervals of about three centimeters, and left one side of each stick about ten centimeters long without bending. Then he took all the sticks into his left hand and folded them into triangles. Once again the answers given us by the great Father-Mother spirit were shown by the position of the upper side of the triangle and the tips. A horizontal position meant "situation unchanged"; if the tip of the triangle was directed toward the conjurer, it was taken as affirmative; if it was turned away from him, it was taken as negative.

Again we examined the oracle sticks and learned from them the following answers: Tigers, elephants, and buffalo have moved far away. Deer have remained and can be hunted since the other omens are not unfavorable. The old bull elephant: likewise "situation unchanged." He has therefore returned and is again occupying his station from which we pursued it in vain some days previously. The interpreter's question was also answered: his wife and child were doing well. The chief added that the wife was sleeping badly because she was worried about her husband. His son was thinking of him -- my informants put it in a rather charming way: "His soul is hopping to the father."

The answers to all six of the questions posed by me coincided fully with my own assumptions. Hence I had no objections to complying with them. This time, too, however, I could not test their correctness, for, although we did shoot deer, we did not have time to wait for the return of other big game, and I

Miao AE5
Akha AO4

/198 cont./

M could not take the time to check whether or not they were
123 actually to be found in their haunts. Moreover, such an attempt
224 would very obviously have shown distrust of the oracle. Much
787 later we learned that the interpreter's wife had actually been
worried about her husband. We had stayed in the primeval forest area much longer than was originally intended and had all been given up for lost.

A The Akha, too, believe that there are human beings who
756 are born with supernatural faculties, but, in contrast to the
/199/ Meau, know far fewer people of this kind. Accordingly,
A the latter are regarded as much more powerful than they are
[634] among the Meau. These people are the chief shamans, called
[621] tŭmŏ̄. Every tŭmŏ̄ stands over many villages, and if one remembers that the villages of the Akha embrace several hundred houses, the importance of the tŭmŏ̄ becomes obvious.

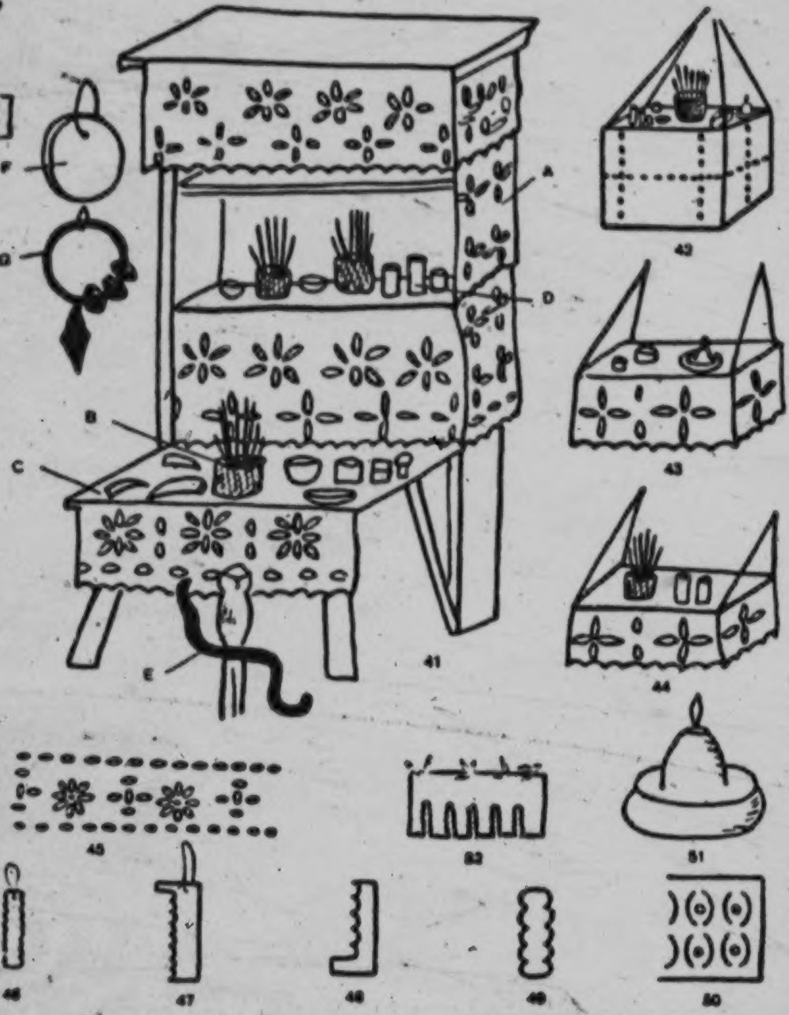
A The ordinary shaman is called bŭbā́ among the Akha. This
[622] office often coincides with that of the chief. Aside from this, however, the bŭbā́ plays a comparatively larger role than the tŭmŏ̄, because in every village there lives a bŭbā́, who is far more intimately connected with his village community than the tŭmŏ̄ is with the villages under him.

A Both the tŭmŏ̄ and the bŭbā́ are mediators between the
756 spirits and human beings. The bŭbā́ has to offer the regular
778 sacrifices to the spirits, and furthermore, above all, he has to
[776] take care of the spirit of the swing and the guardian spirit. Accordingly, he is in charge of the management and upkeep of the sacral gates. Also, the wooden idols beside the sacral gates (Ill. 48)[1] are carved at his command by men of the village chosen by him, who also decorate the gates newly erected every year, while the old gates gradually disintegrate. This
A custom made it easy for us to ascertain how many years previously
[174] a village had been founded. One need only count the number of gates at the entrance to the village.

[1] [See cat 116, p333 - ANALYST]

Miao AE5

778
531
[534]



[411]

[354]
[782]

Figs. 41-52. Altars of the Meau.

[787] Fig. 41. Large altar for the worship of the ancestors and the teacher-spirit of the shaman. 1/24 nat. size: A = punched-out paper curtain as decoration for the wooden frame; B = small basket with incense candles; C = oracle horns; D = small tea

(continued)

39: Bernatzik--277 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AOl Thailand

Miao AE5

/203 cont./

782 One turns to the appropriate deity by means of prayer. which, however, might better be called invocation. One squats
[516] or kneels on one leg and puts the hands at chest height with the palms together. When invoking the high Father-Mother spirit, one looks toward heaven and lifts his folded hands in this direction; when invoking other spirits, the ancestors, for instance, one looks at the altar dedicated to the one invoked. In this position
[788] and with simple words one informs the deity concerned of his
[756] wish; prayer formulas are unknown. The shaman, too converses
[787] with the spirits as with human beings; there is neither a special spirit-language nor special magic formulas.

788 The Meau are also familiar with benedictions, and the person of higher rank pronounces his blessing upon the person lower in rank. Thus, the chief blesses his subjects, the shaman his fellow-tribesmen, the father his children. The person pro-
[516] nouncing the benediction folds his hands in the manner described, stretches them first over the head of the person to be blessed and then up to heaven, and at the same time invokes the Father-Mother spirit, whom he beseeches to bring good fortune to the protégé, to grant him a safe journey, or, in short, to bless the undertaking.

769 As was already pointed out, the Meau erect places of worship
776 which are regarded as the principal abodes of the spirits and are
782 dedicated to them. In general, sacrifices may be offered to the spirits and to the ancestors only at these places of worship erected
[778] for them. The ancestors, for instance, grant protection against the revenge of evil spirits. For this, however, one must explain to them what the /204/ situation is. If one meets an evil spirit in the bush, he runs home as fast as his legs will carry him, in order to offer a sacrifice to the ancestors, who otherwise would not know what has happened and therefore would be unable to help. Then one would be helplessly exposed to the revenge of the evil spirit.

778 Aside from the ancestors, every Meau builds places of worship
776 and, to be sure, altars (Fig. 41 to Fig. 44), for those spirits with whom
[782] he stands in a special relationship and to whom he sacrifices regularly because he needs their protection and their help in particular.

/208 cont./

769 As has already been described in detail in the pertinent
782 sections of the chapter, "Life in the Community," sacrifices
are offered to the ancestors on the third day after the birth of a
[852] child, in connection with the conclusion of a marriage, and
[764] at the burial of a human being. When it is a matter of the
death of the head of a family, his chief wife, together with the
oldest son of the deceased, offers a sacrifice.

The Meau is not satisfied, however, with the sacrifices
mentioned, for the ancestors play an important role in all the
details of his everyday life. For example, the spirits are informed of any change in the number of the livestock of the
household, since whenever anyone sacrifices an animal, he does
not fail to let some blood drip upon sacral paper and in burning
this, calls upon the ancestors to enjoy themselves as well. If
[437] an animal is sold alive, one sacrifices an appropriate amount of
spirit-money to the ancestors, informs them of the sale, and
thanks them for their help in letting the animal become large
and strong. Even if one only sells a little pig, he remembers
the ancestors and thanks them for letting the sow become so
great with young and bring so many young into the world.

484 Sacrifices are made not only before decisive events, but
782 also before beginning any kind of work or prior to a journey. I
was able to take part in one such sacrifice. The brother-in-law
[461] of Chief Tsin Tsai had come for a visit and now intended to
return to his village. The chief decided to sacrifice a pig in
order to make sure that his relative would have a safe trip. The
sacrifice was offered to the high Father-Mother spirit, and
accordingly the bench that otherwise stood in front of the altar
within the house was set up in front of the house. The fettered
live pig was put on it in such a way /209/ that its snout projected
beyond it. On the ground under it spirit-money in the value of
the pig was burned, and through this it was "bought" from the
spirits (Ill. 103).[1] The bench was then cleared, and on it the
chief placed bowls of tea and incense candles and added six
pieces of spirit-money, each having the spirit-value of 25 pieces
[787] of silver. Next he picked up the oracle horns and asked the
spirits whether his brother-in-law would have a safe journey home.

[1] [see cat 116, P704- ANALYST]

Miao AE5

/210 cont./

778 which the spirit-money is made. Paper is also produced solely
782 for cultic purposes. It assumes its value as a sacrificial offering,
[413] however, only after it has been punched with the special punches
in appropriate fashion. For this purpose the paper is folded, and
the punch is driven through all the sheets at the same time.

[824] To make the incense candles one uses the bark of two
special trees, which is dried and pounded, and then the bark
powder thus obtained is pressed into stick form. These incense
candles glimmer with considerable smoke and thereby disseminate
a pleasant odor like incense.

778 One likewise usually makes the spirit-swords himself.
411 In the Meau village of Kun Fa on the border of Thailand and
Indochina, however, I found /211/ a spirit-sword made of bronze
●787 (Fig. 55) in the possession of a shaman. The owner told me
that in a dream the great Father-Mother spirit had told him to
lay out a rice field at a certain place in the jungle. When he
set to work to carry out the order, he found the sword under the
earth. The shaman was convinced that the sword had been sent
directly to him from the Father-Mother spirit so that he could fight
the evil spirits more effectively and that the great bisexual Father-Mother spirit had killed evil dragons with this bronze sword before
he threw it to him down on earth. /Figs. 53-55 appear here./

778 Another ceremonial implement is the magic rattle (chap-
534 ter on "Art," Fig. 31) of the shamans, which the Meau smiths
[177] manufacture themselves. One also sporadically finds rattles of
Chinese origin.

Aside from these cult and ceremonial implements, still
to be named briefly are the sacral musical instruments, which
also have been mentioned in a previous section of this work
(chapter on "Art," section on "Music and Musical Instruments").
They are the bronze gong (chapter on "Art," Fig. 30), which
can be of various sizes, skin drums in the shape of hourglasses,
[177] which are covered at one end and are always of foreign and mostly
Laotian origin, and the mouth organs (chapter on "Art," Fig.
26). The latter, to be sure, are not used solely in connection
with cult activities, but must be included here since, as was
pointed out, their sound is regarded as pleasing to the spirits.

Akha A04
Miao AE5

/234 cont./

M basis of their fine gift of observation, experience, and diagnostic
755 talents. This attempted cure through conjuration is thus em-
[164] ployed especially in the case of an outbreak of epidemics, such
as the plague, and for malaria, amoebic dysentery, cretinism,
mental diseases, and so forth. Such observations undoubtedly
prompted Savina (1) to make the following remarks:

1. II, p. 259.

M
[753] "The Meau regard all sicknesses as punishment from
heaven or as an act of revenge on the part of evil spirits. In the
first case, the shamans recite prayers in front of an altar. In
the second case, they drive the spirits out of the patient and
swing swords in doing so. Also, coins in the shape of a cross
are sewed on the patient's clothes (on the back). Human figures
made of cloth are sewed on the back or the stomach. Paper
dolls are pasted on the walls and above the altar."

M Aside from the shamans, some of whom are not unskilled in
757 medicine, there are men among the Meau who fight illness with
[759] the help of their medicines. They sometimes also prescribe
remedies, according to the results of questioning the oracle
● [787] about it, but in such cases they let the spirits /235/ make the
choice between such medicines which, according to their view,
might be useful in the particular case of illness.

M Under these circumstances, the assertion by Dhuraratsadorn (1),

[114]
[177] 1.Page 172.

who advocates the view that the Meau usually use the medicaments of the Haw (Western Chinese) since they themselves have no knowledge of medicine, is undoubtedly inaccurate.

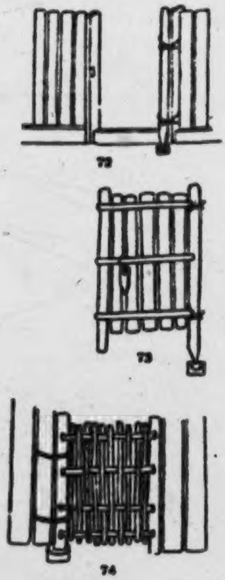
A This is much more the case among the Akha, who are
753 much more helpless against sickness than the Meau are. The
782 Akha believe that all sickness is the work of evil spirits and
try to protect themselves by means of offerings which are sup-
776 posed to propitiate the spirits.

39: Bernatzik--381 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand

Miao AE5

/276 cont./

342



Figs. 72-74.
The doors of the Meau.
About 1/7 nat. size.
Fig. 72. Entrance door of wood.
Fig. 73. Door-leaf of Fig. 72.
Fig. 74. Entrance door of bamboo.

342 787 [782] The construction of a dwelling proceeds in the following manner: After the site of the future dwelling has been carefully chosen, spirit-money is sacrificed and the ancestors and the high Father-Mother spirit are asked whether the place is auspicious. Then one listens attentively all around and looks for possible omens (see the chapter, "Religion and Magic," the section, "Magic, Soothsaying, Interpretation of Omens"). One now erects a leaf-roof and sleeps under it. If now there are still no unfavorable omens observable and no dreams of unfavorable portent occur, then the men and women together begin to clear the site of all brush and level it off.

/354 cont./

178 243 Lajonquière (2), too, has devoted attention to the cultivation of this field product among the Meau: "Wherever the Meau were able to adopt wet-rice fields, they have preferred to devote themselves to this work."

241 [596] [782] When the Meau in Thailand has found a suitable site in the forest for laying out fields, he goes there at the beginning of the dry season with the members of his large /extended/ family, sacrifices spirit-money, and requests first the ancestors and then the high Father-Mother spirit to help him and to protect him and his family against falling trees. Then all possible
● [787] omens are carefully noted. If no bad omens are discovered and none appear during the clearing that is now begun, the work is diligently continued. First the brush and the small trees, later the larger ones, are cut. Giant trunks, however, which offer /355/ too much resistance to the axes of the natives, are only hacked circularly, and the brush is piled up high around
[314] them. If resinous pine is encountered during this work, it is left standing, but tapped so that the resin flowing out, which is a desirable product, will collect in the hollows of the tree. About a month later, when the cut underbrush and wood are thoroughly dry, the field is burned off and cleared of the half-burned wood; the latter is now piled around the trunks of the still unconquered primeval-forest giants, and everything is set afire again. Thus, even the mightiest trunks are finally
[243] destroyed and only slightly hinder the growing seed of the mountain rice in its development under their crowns now stripped of foliage.

243 During the time between the burning and the first rains, which are awaited for the cultivation so that the forest soil will be sufficiently softened to receive the seed, the Meau
[343] erect a small workhouse which is never lacking (Ill. 104).[1]
[417] On the other hand, no fence is built around the field, unless it borders on the field of another. In that case a fence of
[423] crude wooden sticks is erected on the boundary line. After

---

2. II, p. 309.

[1] [see cat 116, p705- ANALYST]

Miao AE5

/468 cont./

115
156
622
123
"Chief Tsin Tsai is a wonderful fellow. When he sits cross-legged on the ground, his long back hair knotted, the long tobacco pipe in his hand, his high forehead furrowed in thought, tensing the muscles of his lean jaws, /469/ stroking his sparse beard which hangs down from his strongly projecting zygomatic arches, he is so remarkably the typical representative of his industrious people, and yet he towers above their average. Not for a moment is he idle or unoccupied. Now he plaits a basket; scarcely finished, he cuts up a piece of game and distributes the meat, and now he sharpens his knife on a stone and goes into the bush for a few minutes. There he digs up some edible roots and brings them to us as a welcome supplement to our monotonous diet in the camp and visits my husband at his work in order to propose a hunting trip together. As soon as my husband has consented, he goes into his house to lay out a stick oracle and ask the spirits in which direction he must turn in order to have success, what kind of booty he can expect, and more of the same. During this time his people have come back from the fields. They quietly wait for the oracle and then turn to the chief with a series of questions. Quietly and decisively the latter now gives his orders and then is off on the hunt."

[224
787]

A few pages further in her journal my wife returns to the chief: "It is a pleasure to watch Tsin Tsai at work. He is friendly and helpful, offers us every service, carries the hand luggage, and regards no work as 'beneath his dignity.' Moreover, he is clever, circumspect, and prudent; he sizes up the situation immediately and is able to differentiate between the essential and the nonessential. He answers questions with brief, logical, and sensible replies. If one asks him for advice, he always supplements his information with detailed reasoning. To be sure, in matters dealing with hunting, he always judges for us on the basis of his own experiences, so that sometimes differences result. He maintains, for instance, that, after a shot, tigers come along to search for wounded game, whereas our experience was that they immediately disappeared, never to be seen again. Moreover, wild animals were generally much more timid than he expected, probably because there were more of us than he was accustomed to.

/469 cont./

115 156 622 123 [787] His unconditional reliance on the information from the spirits by way of the oracle is characteristic of him. We also discovered that prior to our arrival he had asked the spirits what our secret intentions were. The information must have been favorable for us, since he decided to obey us unconditionally. /470/ I can well imagine, however, that if the opposite had been the case, everything would have been other but pleasant.

[756] [757] "Tsin Tsai carefully cultivates his fields and in addition is an excellent smith who is even able to forge guns and to melt and work silver. He knows how to make paper as well as to castrate animals. His real passion is for the hunt. Finally, he also acts as shaman, questions the spirits, and offers sacrifices to the ancestors and spirits. He also, however, undoubtedly possesses medical knowledge, and the Meau come to him from afar in order to be treated by him. Without detriment to these activities, he discharges his duties as village chief and judge to the satisfaction of all."

762 Although the vitality of the Meau seems almost inexhaustible and they are very cheerful, suicides nevertheless occur. In three instances that I learned of, it was a matter of unhappily married women who had no chance of getting a divorce. In one case, a young man could not get along with his older brother who was acting as the head of the family.

53 The Meau are not especially good orators, but on the other hand are very talented lyrically as poets and singers.

177 In keeping with their great vitality, they are open to innovations if a thing does not conflict with their tradition, their religious prohibitions, or their experiences. They indeed cling tenaciously to their traditional attire, but, from what has been said, they may be regarded as quite adaptable. To be sure, Savina (1)

1. II, p. 188.

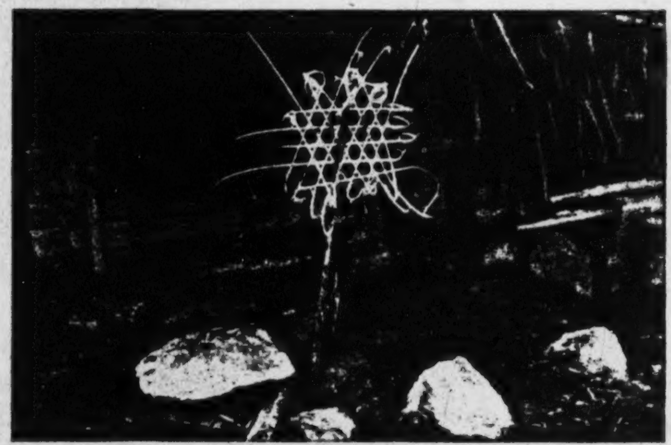
states: "During the course of his migration he (the Meau, note by Dr. B.) has seen among other peoples houses that were much more comfortable than his own. And yet it never occurs to him to build something similar." In my opinion, however, this does

39: Bernatzik--663 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947 AO1 Thailand

Miao AE5

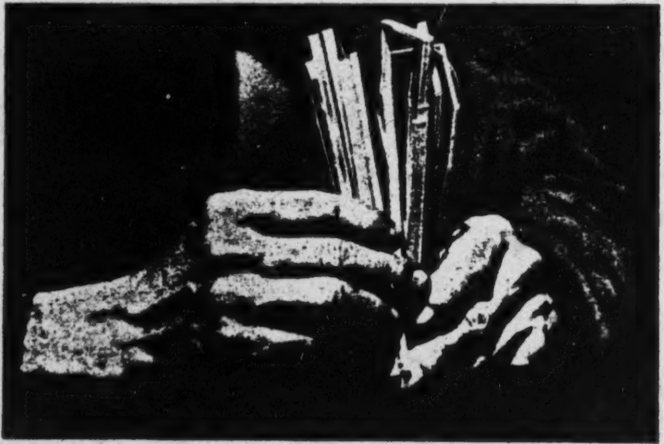
/Opposite p.490/

778
527



Ill. 97. Sacral sign, which, set up in front of the house door, announces the beginning of a holiday among the Meau.

787



Ill. 98. Meau questions the spirits with the help of a stick oracle.

39: Bernatzik--664 E-5 (1936-1937) 1947
AOl Thailand
Miao AE5

353
755
778
756
787

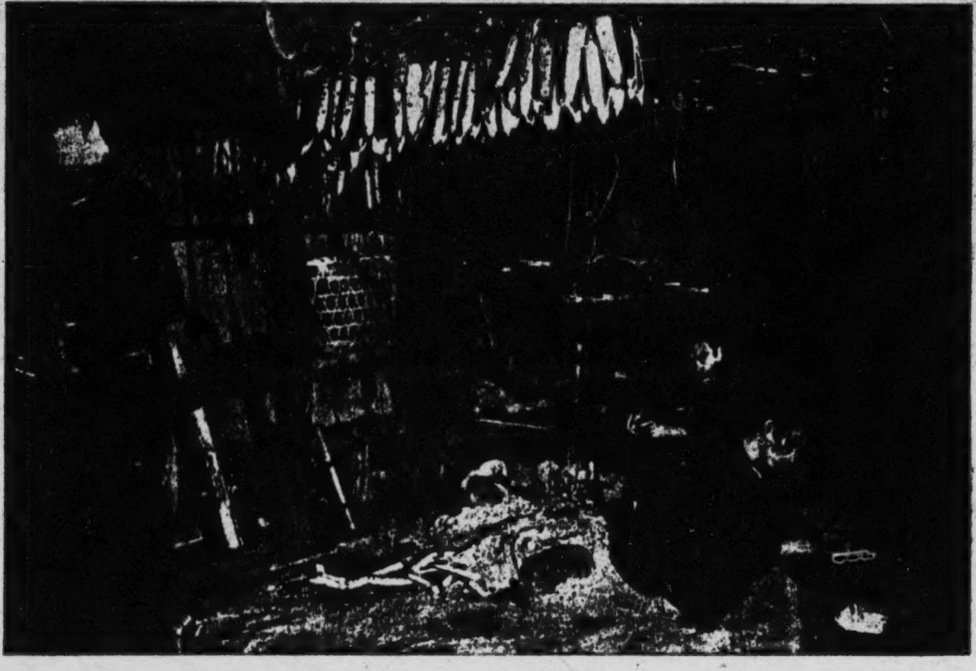
Ill. 99. A Meau shaman conjures up the spirits, in order to call back a lost soul.

/Between pp. 490 and 491/

Miao AE5

/Between pp. 490 and 491/

353
782
787
755



Ill. 100. At the command of the invoked spirits, spirit money is burned in a pit in the floor of the house.

Miao AE5

/IX cont./

252 256 the two millstone halves with each other is lengthened or shortened, it is possible to hull the rice or maize kernels or to grind them into coarser or finer flour.

243 [412] Ill. 95. Rice-harvesting knife of the Meau. It consists of a semicircular wooden handle with an inserted metal blade. A string over the back of the hand provides the necessary firmness. The photograph clearly shows how the implement is held. The ears are cut individually, row after row. Because of the manual dexterity of the Meau, the harvesting nevertheless proceeds rapidly.

Ill. 96. Part of the rice is hulled in the field. A hole carved in a felled giant of the primeval forest forms the container. The pestle is fastened to a crosspole and is set in motion when one steps on the shorter lever. The axis of the lever arm is fastened between the upright wooden posts.

Ills. 97-103. Religion and magic.

778 Ill. 97. Sacral sign that the shaman sets up in front of the doors of the houses as a sign of a holiday.

787 Ill. 98. Stick oracle. A number of questions are addressed to the spirits. Each bamboo stick signifies a question. All the sticks are bent in a special manner. The answer of the spirits is signified by the position of the upper edge of the bend.

755 787 [756] Ill. 99. Calling back a lost soul. The shaman (left) has thrown oracle horns (the tips of gaur horns) on the ground. Only if these come to rest in a certain way does it mean that the spirits are willing to appear. The magic rattle is on the bench in the foreground. In the background squats the father of the patient, beside whom, on the beam, is the patient, whose soul "has fled beyond the clouds."

[782] Ill. 100. Continuation of the ceremony from Ill. 99. The invoked spirits have given the order to dig a pit in the floor of the house and then to burn spirit-money. The lost soul of the patient is urged to enter the pit. It is then closed with a stone and the soul, it is believed, is caught.